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GOOD-NATURE:

OR,

Senſibility:

AND OTHER TALES.

BY MISS AIMWELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Oh, Nature! wherefore, Nature, are we form'd
One contradiction—the continual sport
Of fighting pow'rs? Oh, wherefore hast thou sown
Such war within us—such unequal conflict
Between slow Reason and impetuous Passion?
THOMSON.

VOL. I.

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GOOD-NATURE.

"CLANALVON, Clanalvon, my love!" cried the mother of the young earl of Clanalvon; "Elizabeth, go find your brother. I can do nothing without his assistance," she added, springing from a table where she had stood to arrange the last fold of a drapery, in preparation for a grand ball to be given that night, in honour of her son's coming of age.

"Indeed, mamma," replied lady Elizabeth, "that drapery requires nothing more—there cannot be any thing more full and beautiful than its folds; and Clanalvon is engaged in other parts of the house, superintending the workmen, who have been so delayed by perpetual alterations, that, we fear, the decorations of the supper-room will not be completed in time."

Lady Clanalvon, who did not like contradiction, only noticed this observation with—"Olivia, my love, call your brother."

Olivia obeyed, and found her brother as deeply engaged in the arrangements of the supper-room as her mother was in the draperies of the ball-room. Their objects however were different—his being to expedite, hers to add new graces to what she already admired as beautiful.

Clanalvon, after giving directions to the workmen, which, fortunately for the pleasure of the evening, were better attended to than directions to workmen usually are, flew to attend his mother. All she had done—all she still meant to do, met his approbation; he said he saw her tasteful hand in every ornament—thanked her for desiring his advice—praised the general regulations, which had been directed by his elder sister—assisted his mother in all that she could not execute herself, yet would not leave to inferior hands—and then was quitting the room, but turned, with a heightened colour, and asked lady Elizabeth—"Was she yet certain that Mrs. Nugent would be returned from her distant visit in time for the evening?"

"Oh, yes!" replied she, "they are come. I have had a note from Emily—they will certainly be here early."

Clanalvon then repeated his great admiration of, and thankfulness for, all their proceedings, and returned to the supper-room.

"My darling child!" exclaimed his mother, gazing after him; "he is now grown from infancy to manhood, and never could I trace one fault in his character—never did he give me one moment's pain. I can most confidently say, his equal does not tread the earth."

"Then he has some flying aerial equals," said Elizabeth, laughing; "for certainly his equals are somewhere to be found;

but, seriously, I believe, with all his faults, there are few young men so amiable as Clanalvon."

"With all his faults, Elizabeth! with all his faults!" said lady Olivia, earnestly; "what can you call a fault in Clanalvon, save what proceeds from too much self-regardless generosity?"

"But no one can have *too much* of any thing, without a very great fault—extremes meet, you know," replied her sister.

"However, if Clanalvon has any faults, and I do not think he has," lady Olivia began——

"If he has any faults," lady Clanalvon repeated, "this day, which ought to be a day of pleasure to him, is not the day to dwell on them; nor is his sister—I must say it, my dear Elizabeth—the person to bring them forward."

Olivia made some gentle remark, which calmed her mother, and then drew her attention from the subject, by praising the taste Elizabeth had shewn in her preparations for the arrangement of the supper-tables, which had been principally left to her.

"I do not know what they are, my dear—I have not had time to look at them," replied lady Clanalvon.

Olivia then entered into a description of them, which charmed the mother into more than usual good-humour with Elizabeth, who was far from being her favourite child.

Notwithstanding the delays occasioned by the minute and restless taste of lady Clanalvon, the decorations were at length completed, and the family and house were in a state of elegant and splendid preparation to receive the expected guests.

While waiting for their arrival, Clanalvon, with eyes of animated affection, surveyed the group. He gratified his mother by his fervent praises of her fine form, unimpaired beauty, and the tasteful elegance with which she had adorned them. The soft, the fascinating loveliness which sparkled in the bright eyes, and smiled in the glowing lip and cheek of Olivia, he regarded with a fondness even exceeding that with which his delighted glance turned to the more dignified and womanly figure of Elizabeth. Joy seemed to have made her dwelling-place in the happy family—it beamed on the manly yet modest countenance of the youthful hero of the day—it spoke in every look and movement of the proud and happy mother—it danced in the smiling eyes of Elizabeth—and it was personified in the bright glances, the springing step, of the animated Olivia.

Nor was their cousin, Charles Montague, the least happy of the party. The orphan only son of lady Clanalvon's sister, he had been principally brought up in the family of his aunt, and loved his cousins, Clanalvon and lady Olivia, with all the tenderness of a brother; but Elizabeth had, from childhood, held more than a sister's place in his affections, and now he gazed on her with the delighted consciousness, that when surrounded by admiration and flattery, his approbation would still be, as in their hours of domestic retirement, dearer to her than all.

Lady Clanalvon was beautiful in person, elegant in taste, amiable, and affectionate in disposition. Possessed of abilities equal to the attainment of all that usually goes by the name of accomplishment, she was deficient in the far more important advantages of sound sense and correct judgment—indeed vanity too often seemed to usurp the place of both, and, except in those stronger instances in which the line of distinction between right and wrong is too decidedly marked to be mistaken, was the prime mover of all her actions. Under this influence, her sensibility, lovely in itself, was cherished into a fault by the admiration it excited. Amiable feelings were ever more interesting to her, more valuable in her eyes, than solid principles. The strong sensibility of her son was, therefore, to her the most attaching feature of his character; the first impulse of his generous nature was always kind, benevolent, and liberal; but the first impulse is rarely just, and his mother feared that to teach him to weigh the consequences and dependencies of actions, would be to debase the glowing ardour of his character into cold philosophy and calculating prudence. Thus in infancy, when in witnessing any contest between a little boy and a larger, he uniformly took part with the former, it was never once suggested to him, that the big boy might possibly have a right to the toy or apple which the little one wanted to wrest from him. Whoever seemed to be the suffering party, was sure of his zealous uninquiring support; and whenever his guardian wished to give him juster ideas and larger views, or to check the impetuous bravery with which he frequently endangered his life, in feats of activity beyond his years, by pointing out to him the injury he did his mother in alarming her, she constantly declared that she would not have his noble spirit restrained—his was the age for feeling and for ardour—time would teach him reason and prudence. Time, however, had led him up to one-and-twenty, and reason and prudence were on these subjects as distant as ever.

The same mode of education operated less strongly upon the softer mind of his sister Olivia, but produced no injurious effect on that of Elizabeth, which was early directed to a more reflective turn, by her strong attachment to her cousin Montague, whose character, naturally as ardent as that of Clanalvon, had been moulded in infancy by the more judicious care of those parents, his deep affliction for whose loss, before he had attained his twelfth year, gave added force to their instructions.

Crowds collected rapidly in the magnificent apartments of Clanalvon Castle; and lady Clanalvon had the pleasure of receiving from every guest either some compliment on the birthday of her darling son, or some praises of the beauty of her house and daughters. The singular captivation of manner she possessed was in itself sufficient to give universal pleasure. Her attentions were general; yet some she addressed with a familiarity which seemed to raise them in their own opinion, while none could pass the bounds she prescribed to their degree of intimacy with her.

Clanalvon's pride and affection were both gratified in seeing his mother appear to such advantage, particularly when he saw the admiration she excited beam with expressive brightness on the countenance of Miss Nugent, who often turned her eyes on him, to see if his were fixed on the same object.—"I have been observing," she said, when lady Clanalvon went into another room, "the pleasure of every face as your mother spoke. Your sisters too—how beautiful lady Elizabeth looks! and did you ever see Olivia's angel-face look so lovely?"

Lady Olivia Fitzmaurice was, through the whole neighbourhood, considered as the only beauty who could rival Miss Nugent, and Clanalvon always felt, with peculiar pleasure, the praises they bestowed on each other—unfolding a trait of character more dear to his generous spirit, than all the beauty he admired with a brother's pride in one, and a lover's fondness in the other.

While they stood near the door of entrance, so absorbed was he in observing the admiration with which she regarded his family, as they received the company, that Emily was often obliged to remind him of the politeness he owed them. But though ever ready to give praise where it was due, Emily possessed a fancy too animated, and a judgment too clear, to be a universal admirer; and though every mistake of ignorance she good-naturedly accounted for, the absurdities which she saw were affected as elegant, she remarked with playful, not sarcastic ridicule—"Lord Clanalvon," she said, "will you tell me which you are—the stupidest or most modest of men?"

"Perhaps neither—perhaps only the most pre-occupied."

"But do waken for a moment, in charity," said Emily, laughing, "and look at poor Miss T——, who has been smiling this half-hour in vain. I am sure," she added, "you would be more attentive, if you could see how ridiculous a smile or attitude, intended for one happy individual, becomes, when by his disregard compelled to continue such an unnatural length of time."

"But they are not all aimed at me. See the pretty helplessness with which Miss R—— has been labouring to disengage herself from that shawl, till Howard came to her assistance. But," he added, "how curious it is to observe the very same action in one so ridiculous—in another so pretty! See! there is a young lady leans on the arm of the sofa just as Miss T—— did."

"No, not quite in the same manner," said Emily; "she leans forward, you see; and I find you did not observe the peculiar elegance which bent Miss T—— to one side, while standing near your lordship—I say, your lordship; for I cannot flatter you, that the young ladies would break their backs so for simple Edmund Fitzmaurice. But see!" continued Emily, "they are going to dance, and you have not yet got a partner."

"I thought," said Clanalvon, "you had promised to dance with me?"

"No, no—it would be very rude to take me out the first set, when there are so many ladies of higher rank in the room. I dare say I shall get a partner; and if not, it will do me no harm to sit a set with my aunt and lady Howard, who, I see, are together. Take me to them, and do make haste."

"You are very anxious, Miss Nugent, to drive me from you."

"No, indeed," Emily answered, earnestly; "you know I would rather dance with you than any one."

"Then why do you refuse me now?"

"Because you ought to go to some other lady," replied Emily, smiling, as she held out her hand.

"You shew your power, Miss Nugent, in making me at pleasure give up my greatest enjoyment," said Clanalvon, pressing her hand, as he led her towards Mrs. Nugent.

Emily was asked by Charles Montague, and when they had gone through the first dance, by mutual wish they approached the spot where lady Elizabeth stood chatting with her sister, whose partner, Mr. Howard, had left her to seek some refreshment for her. He shortly returned, and, laughing, told her he had been delayed bringing her the ice by a *ruse de guerre* of Mrs. Mansfield, which he had been observing practised on a young nobleman of the company.—"I just came in time," said Mr. Howard, "to hear her tell him that her silly timid Maria could not endure the idea of dancing with a stranger, she is so foolishly bashful; 'and, indeed, my lord,' continued Robert Howard, imitating the affected tone of Mrs. Mansfield, 'I fear she must be compelled to it, for she is not acquainted with a creature here, except two, who, I know, are always better engaged.' Lord P—— did not take the hint, and she went on to inform him, that lord Clanalvon was of course going to dance with Miss Nugent, and his lordship, poor Maria's only other acquaintance, she supposed, was engaged to one of the ladies Fitzmaurice."

"I thought," said Emily, turning her eyes archly on her partner—"I thought Mrs. Mansfield was acquainted with Mr. Montague."

"Oh! she is acquainted with him, and Mr. Howard, for the ugly daughter," replied lady Olivia, laughing; "but I have often heard that she says Maria is born to be a countess."

"That is fortunate for commoners," said Montague; "for really, were she to use as much finesse to obtain a husband as she does to get partners, I scarcely know how a disengaged man could escape."

"Neither did poor lord P——," said Howard; "and I believe, had he been led to the altar, he could scarcely have suffered more. Poor fellow! he was just coming, full of glee, to ask lady Elizabeth or Miss Nugent; but he blushed, and begged for the honour of Miss Mansfield's hand."

"To the altar, or for the dance?" inquired Emily.

"For the dance to-night; but he is fortunate if he is not made to dance to the altar, unless Clanalvon's more ancient title draws the enemy aside."

"We shall have a ball then in a few days, to secure the affair," said Olivia.

"Oh, yes!" replied Howard; "I saw the poor husband turn pale from that consciousness, when lord P—— called Miss Mansfield 'your beautiful daughter."

At this instant Clanalvon joined the group, telling them he had just heard Mrs. Mansfield invite his mother and her young people to a ball at her house the night but one after.

All laughed at the rapidity with which the lady managed the business of her life.

"It is a pity for the world," said Emily, "that Mrs. Mansfield was not a man;

surely such talents for generalship would have been more serviceably employed in the field of Mars than in the rosy gardens of Cupid—in storming a citadel, than in seizing a heart."

"Oh! a heart is the most glorious of all conquests, Miss Nugent," cried Clanalvon; "but I cannot say that her mode of attack is good in that respect. In the Hymeneal war, however, she makes as bold efforts to conquer coronets as ever Alexander did to overturn empires."

"We must admit that she possesses talents which might have formed an Alexander," continued Emily, "had she, poor woman! but had the same objects to fight for; but still,

> "In female dress, with equal skill,
> She fights for love, and he for glory."

"In one respect she sadly fails," said Howard; "she never sees where the ground is pre-occupied. In her attempts on Clanalvon for her eldest, and Montague for her second daughter, she has wholly overlooked the secret ambush laid in both hearts."

"As an auctioneer, however, not one fault could be found with her talents," said Elizabeth.

"No, indeed," added Olivia; "at least if her voice is not as loud, her lungs are as much laboured as any auctioneer's, in crying out—'Walk into the auction;' and when once the purchaser is in, we all know the rapidity with which she recounts the beauty, elegance, good-humour, French, Italian, bashfulness, fashion, sense, dancing, and modesty, of the beautiful young lady now set up to sale."

"That is for the pretty one," said Howard; "but for the little, black, pock-marked, pig-eyed thing behind—what can she say?"

"Oh! I believe she might say with truth that she is very amiable," said Emily; "I have heard that she is extremely charitable; I know she often makes toys for the poor. You smile, lord Clanalvon; but, I assure you, though the mother's puffing manner makes it impossible not to laugh at the daughters, Miss Jenny Mansfield is a very good and sensible girl."

"My smile was not one of ridicule," replied Clanalvon, smiling again as he looked at her animated countenance.

"Or if it was, you could not be blamed," she answered; "for when one sees all the plots and counterplots to obtain a partner or a compliment, it is impossible not to see how laughable they are. To say the truth, I am wicked enough to think those good people who are too good-natured to see the ridiculous, cannot have their own faculties very brilliantly alive; but at the same time, lively faculties cannot be better employed than in duly appreciating what is praiseworthy."

"I now see," said Charles Montague, "why Miss Nugent's satire always amuses and never offends. She justly separates between what is valuable and what is blameable, and throws a good-natured laugh, rather than an austere censure, on what she cannot approve; so that her satire rather softens than exaggerates error."

"And in the same way I have known some who could make what rigid moralists would call vices, appear only simple foibles," said Howard.

"Never, Miss Nugent," exclaimed Clanalvon, fervently—"never did she lend her playful fancy to throw a lustre over vice."

"Never, I hope," rejoined Emily. "Vanity I do not consider a fault deserving serious moral censure, at least when it only leads to harmless follies, that without injuring others makes its possessor ridiculous. But," she resumed, blushing at once from earnestness and bashfulness, "I have expressed myself incorrectly, for vanity is a serious moral evil, and ought not to be encouraged, because it often leads to envy and other vicious feelings. When it shews itself in the innocent forms at which we have been laughing, it is only an object of good-natured ridicule."

"I have heard many a drollery from Emily, but never one levity," said lady

Elizabeth; "and this is a point in which in society we are particularly called on to discriminate, or else we may often do a serious injury, when we intend only a harmless jest."

"But I was far," said Howard, "from meaning a reproach; "I do not know that I ever did hear Miss Nugent pass lightly over a serious fault; but if I did, I should call it good nature, not levity."

"If it be good-nature," said Elizabeth, smiling, "to treat serious faults lightly, we are to conclude that it is still greater good-nature to approve of them."

"Not altogether that," replied Clanalvon; "wrong ought not to be approved of, neither should any one encourage another to do wrong; but when the thing is done, it cannot be undone, and benevolence then requires us to make the best of it."

"Certainly," said Emily, with more than ordinary seriousness; "and I think the best we can make of it is to render it a warning against similar errors."

"True good-nature," added Montague, "believe me, Clanalvon, is no blind quality; it is clear-sighted and wise, and would guard its objects more sedulously from error than from pain."

Olivia, who had been listening earnestly to the conversation, cast on her cousin a look of animated thankfulness, for often had she felt that her brother's good-nature encouraged in Howard levities which she felt inconsistent with the fine qualities he testified."

"Then, asked Clanalvon, "would you have no charity for the culpable?"

"Much for himself," said Emily, "but none for his faults. I could love a person affectionately, and yet hate his faults—perhaps hate them the more for sullying a character otherwise estimable; the errors of a fine mind excite as much regret as disapprobation."

"But if you value a character, must not your partiality for its merits make you overlook its faults?" inquired Howard.

"By no means," said Emily; "there is

an undeviating line of separation between right and wrong—it can never alter; and no partiality ought to lead us to turn our eyes away from it."

"But surely," said Clanalvon, "it is absolutely impossible to see the errors of a person beloved."

"How can that be?" said Emily; "who so devotedly attached as the mother? yet who so quick-sighted, so vigilant, to detect every error?"

"Oh! that is a different case," replied Clanalvon; "that is for the purpose of education."

"But are we not all," said Elizabeth, "in some measure under education, while we remain in this world? Are we not, or rather, ought we not to be in a state of progressive improvement to the last moment of our lives?"

"That is some comfort for the faulty," said Howard, laughing; "for if we are to go on improving till ninety, there must be some allowance for errors at nineteen."

"There are depths in this subject, my dear Howard," said Charles Montague, gravely, "which do not suit the time and place."

"But which I hope you will give us in a sermon before this day twelvemonth," rejoined Howard.

"When," added Emily, "I hope you will not do as we are doing now—preach and not practise. Here are we talking of good-nature, while the few last couples, who have worked their way up to the top, have no one to dance with them."

As she spoke she extended her hand to her partner, and they all joined the dancers. As in the next set Emily and Clanalvon stood waiting to give the lower couples their share of dancing, Emily heard a gentleman behind her whisper another—"What a pity it is that that really-pretty Miss Mansfield is so deplorably silly! I am sure there is not one girl in the room, ugly or pretty, who would not be a preferable partner."

"And I am sure," replied lord P——,

the person addressed, "I shall take care never again to be compelled into dancing with her; any awkwardness in refusing is better."

Emily instinctively turned her eyes on the mother, by whose irritated countenance she perceived that she had heard the whole. Regardless at the moment of any thing but the pains she saw her suffer, she looked at lord Clanalvon with a smile of apology, and instantly seating herself beside her, entered into conversation on the music, dancing, and other common ball-room topics; preventing her, by this kind manœuvre, from exposing herself by attacking the gentlemen, which Emily conjectured, as was actually the case, she was about to do.

While engaged in calming her irritation, without appearing to notice it, Clanalvon and Howard approached; the former, who had overheard the conversation, saw all the beauty of her kindness to the disconcerted schemer; but Howard, who knew nothing of the circumstances, was surprised by her attention to a woman whom he knew she held in very slight estimation; and when he had executed his commission, which was to bring her to lady Olivia in the music-room, he rallied her on it, observing that it did not seem consistent with her usual candour.—"I thought, Miss Nugent," said he, "you always reserved the attentions of friendship for friendship alone; yet I never saw you converse with any one with more appearance of interest than you did with Mrs. Mansfield."

"But there is a sort of friendship which belongs to every one that needs it," said Emily; "now, lord Clanalvon, had I not been nearer her, would you not have done as I did?"

"I do not know whether I would, but I know I ought," replied Clanalvon; and he then related what had passed.

"Oh, that was so like Emily!" said Mrs. Nugent, smiling; "I believe, if a person hurt their hand in knocking her *down, she* would pity it."

" But, dear aunt, Mrs. Mansfield never did any thing to me."

" No, my love," returned Mrs. Nugent, recollecting herself; but her first observation had been caused by observing Mrs. Mansfield's constant endeavours to draw lord Clanalvon from Emily to her beautiful Maria.

It was a late hour before the party separated, most of them hoping to meet the night but one after at Mrs. Mansfield's ball.

Next morning Clanalvon received a letter from his guardian, sir James Gray, reminding him that he had delayed a visit to France, in order to be in Dublin at the time of his coming of age, to settle with him the accounts of the guardianship, and that he had promised the friend who was to accompany him to sail at latest that day week; therefore requesting Clanalvon to set off for town immediately on receipt of his letter.

" This is quite impossible," said Clanalvon, handing it to his mother.

"Why so, my love?" she inquired, when she had read it.

He replied that it was not possible to break his engagement with Mrs. Mansfield, who would be severely disappointed at missing any of her expected guests—"But the day after," he continued, "I can go to sir James, if you wish, though I do not think myself it is of any consequence. My father's creditors are none of them in a state to want the money, and I will give my promise to pay them immediately on settling my affairs with my guardian. The only reason I wished them concluded is, that until I know exactly how my affairs stand, I cannot do many things I want to do; but for the larger of these I have not yet matured the plan: so next year will be time enough for commencing them, and for the smaller things I need not wait, as I certainly have means for them. Those cottages we have been talking of rebuilding must be set about immediately; they are in a very uncomfortable state, and it is not fair that the tenants should be perished through the winter, because I am not in humour to settle my accounts."

"Oh, I am so glad you are determined on that!" cried the mother; "they belong to very decent nice-looking people, and your plan for new-building them is so pretty!"

"And so comfortable too," added lady Elizabeth; "but I am not sure that they ought to be first objects; there are other cottages in a worse state, whose tenants are less able to repair them, as I understand they pay equal rent for inferior land."

"You do not consider, my dear," said lady Clanalvon, "how unreasonable it would be to expect them to make the elegant improvements we have agreed on, as necessary to their situation."

"But if there are others whose cottages really want repairs or rebuilding," said Clanalvon, "taste must give way to compassion; but there is enough for all," he added, unable to disappoint his mother, whose heart was set on beautifying those cottages which lay in view of the road that led to the gate; "I will put all the cabins in comfortable order, and I shall improve my tenantry by it, for the generous Irish character is to be wrought on by gratitude. There is not any thing, consistent with honour, which an Irishman will not do for a landlord at once indulgent and rational."

Clanalvon's patriotism, as well as his every other feeling, was ardent and enthusiastic; and any thing he felt of service to his country, no selfish interest could induce him to give up. In this he was right, but too often he overlooked where others were connected in what he fancied wholly personal.

"Nothing," said Montague, "can be more benevolent and praiseworthy than your plans, provided your funds will answer them. You have already within the year laid out large sums on new-furnishing this and your town-house; expensive equipages are also bespoken; all this is very well—nothing more than is suitable to your rank and fortune, if the savings of your minority will, after the discharge of the previous debts, be able to pay for them; but nothing tends so much to stop the steady course of benevolence to the tenantry, and of general expenditure, by which both tenants and manufacturers are most effectually benefited, as spending too largely from the income first, and saving afterwards to make up for it."

"My dear Charles," said his aunt, "you are talking of prudence and economy, and Clanalvon is thinking of benevolence and generosity."

"Which never can be separated from the others," answered Montague: "the nobleman who delays his payments to his upholsterer, his coachmaker, or his architect, and at the same time presses his tenants for their rents, to make up the amount, injures all, when he might have benefited all, had he only waited until the money came round in its regular course."

"You are right, Charles," said Clanalvon; "and if I ever get into such a scrape, I will neither delay my payments nor press my tenants, but will deny myself in every thing, and live at the least possible expence until all comes round."

Lady Clanalvon cast a glance of fond admiration on her son, and of triumph on her nephew, who, with the aid of lady Elizabeth, vainly endeavoured to convince them that occasional retrenchments in expenditure and establishment must ever be attended with inconvenience to tradespeople, servants, and others, while a steady course of both renders a man of fifteen thousand a-year, with a mind so generous as that of Clanalvon, a blessing to his country; but though in arguments like these it was impossible not to blame the errors of his judgment, it was yet more impossible not to admire the noble enthusiasm with which he seemed to think lightly of every self-sacrifice that could promote the happiness of others.

After this conversation, as Clanalvon was on his way to Riversdale, to ask Miss Nugent for the first set the following night, which he had purposely omitted doing at his own ball, to furnish a pretext for a visit in the intermediate day, he met one of his young tenants, who, with a sorrowful countenance, told him that poor Pat Fagan had been carried off to jail for a paltry bit of a debt of five pounds, that his father could well have paid for him, and was like there to remain, unless some friend would come to his assistance. This was a youth whose activity in the sports and exercises to which he often assembled his tenantry, had drawn the notice and admiration of his young lord, who, on receiving this intelligence, changed his course, and galloped to the county-town, seven miles distant, where he paid the debt and freed the prisoner.

On his way back, he was met by the mother of his *protégé*, who, after a profusion of blessings, thanks, and curtsies, hoped his honour's goodness would not be the ruin of her poor boy, who, she said, had been "the best child in the 'varsal world, until he come across that wild scamp, Jim Higgins" (the lad who had given Clanalvon the information), "who was never asy but when he had him in the public-house; that his father had paid many little debts for him; and sure, my lord," she added, "we were going to leave him to cool his heels a bit in jail, to see if it would bring him to, and himself" (by this an Irishwoman means her husband) "thought to go give him a word of advice, and to take him out as soon as he found himself sinsible of it; and sure enough he'd ha' been the better for it the longest day he has to live, only for his good luck that brought your honour to the knowledge of it, and spoilt it all, for which we're bound to pray for long life and prosperity to your lordship, that knows how to make use of it. Och, it's long before any other gentleman in the country, let alone a lord, would be bothering himself, and putting his horse in such a broil, galloping after the likes of him!"

A little embarrassed, Clanalvon expressed some hesitating hopes that her son would not be the worse for what had happened, and promised to speak to him seriously on the subject.

"Och!" replied the mother, "if your lordship would only say you wou'dn't relase him agin, and just make a mintion to that rascal in the public-house, that he wont be 'ticing him into his books on your honour's account, there'll be no great harm after all! Ad then! it's himself that'll be proud to think you'd do as much for his boy as you've done afore for them that's less desarving."

Finding that the honour of his honour's notice would make ample amends to the mother, for the injury done her son's morals by the failure of the salutary punishment intended him, Clanalvon invited her, with her husband and son, to dine at the castle the following day, when he promised to give Pat a lecture on his misconduct.

By the time this adventure was concluded, he found it was too late to call on Mrs. Nugent, who kept early hours, and the next morning he had heard them say they intended devoting to visiting an old lady at a distance; so that he entered Mrs. Mansfield's ball-room disengaged; and before his eager glance had ascertained whether Emily was yet arrived, he was accosted by his hostess, with warm thanks to him and his family for coming so early, concluding with—"Come, Maria, my love, and thank lord Clanalvon, for being in such good time to open the ball with you."

Retreat was impossible, and as he had too much true good-nature to let his vexation appear, both mother and daughter exulted in their successful *coup-de-main*, which had been occasioned by the defection of lord P——, who, the moment she entered the room, had engaged Miss Nugent.

Emily stood a few couples below, so that, during the dance, he had no opportunity of conversation, nor would the incessant prattle of the delighted Maria have suffered him to enjoy it, had it been within his reach.

As he led his fair partner to her mother, he heard with dismay lord P—— ask his sister Olivia for the next set, for all his good-nature could not prevent his seeing the danger with which this second omission of lord P—— threatened himself. He was accordingly about to make a hasty retreat, when Mrs. Mansfield, remarking how dreadfully her Maria was overheated, requested him to bring her some refreshment.

The interval of his absence gave the mother and daughter time to concert their plans, and when he returned, he found them disputing the possibility of Maria's dancing again. She had heard two or three young men of fashion criticising the dancing so unmercifully, that she would not, could not, durst not, dance.

"Did you ever see such a little bashful fool as she is, my lord?" exclaimed the mother.

"If Miss Mansfield," said Clanalvon, "is afraid to dance before critics, I know not who may venture."

"See now, you silly girl, how kind and encouraging his lordship is! I am sure, my lord, if you will dance this set with her, it will give her courage. Your lordship will excuse the liberty I take with a friend and neighbour. It would look so singular and rude if she were to refuse to dance in her own house, and your lordship knows that the world is so ill-natured, that a young lady cannot with prudence do any thing remarkable."

After many expressions of pretty reluctance on the part of Maria, so far to intrude on his lordship's kindness, she was persuaded by her mother to join the set with him. When he turned Emily in the dance, the brightness of her smile was gone; she looked pale and dejected, but no irritation mingled in the expression.

Like all who give unchecked freedom to natural sensibility, Clanalvon was inclined to jealousy; not the despicable jealousy that is for ever in apprehension of a rival, but the susceptibility which fears that its tenderness is not returned with equal ardour.—" She is dejected," he thought; " some vexation absorbs her mind entirely, and leaves no room for resentment at my apparent neglect."

It did not occur to him, that the mild dignity of a modest female mind feels itself sullied, by the slightest indication of resentment at the cessation of those attentions which it has received with pleasure. The moment, however, he could escape from his partner, he approached the spot where Emily sat between his mother and her aunt. Without the slightest appearance of pique, she answered his request that she would dance with him, by informing him that she was engaged.—

"How unfortunate for me!" cried Clanalvon; "but the next set?"

At that moment some one addressed Emily, and she turned to answer them: on looking back for lord Clanalvon, he was gone, and she shortly saw him lead out Miss Jane Mansfield. Her natural disposition to make the best of every thing, led her to hope that he believed her engaged to him for the next; but no, she refused other partners and he came not. Supper was announced. Emily went down with lady Olivia and Mr. Howard.

Mrs. Nugent's carriage arrived. Clanalvon then rose from the side of the triumphant Miss Mansfield, and flew to attend them to it; but Emily gave her hand to Robert Howard, and Clanalvon had only to lead her aunt.—"My dear Mrs. Nugent," he said, "do you not think there must be some means of doing as one likes at a ball?"

"Undoubtedly," she replied, calmly, and with a degree of coldness he had never before met from her. "Good-night, my lord," she added, as she seated herself in the carriage. Emily thought her manner too cold, and she echoed "good-night, lord Clanalvon!" in a kinder tone.

When the Clanalvon family had all retired to their separate apartments, the mother thought how graceful her pretty Olivia's figure had looked in the dance. She remembered with pleasure many compliments she had received on the beauty and elegance of both her daughters, on the unequalled charms of her own manners, and, more than all, on the sense, talents, conversational powers, fine form, and polished address of her son.

Olivia's heart beat with the recollection of the attention to her friend Emily, and more than attention to herself, shewn during the evening by Robert Howard.

Elizabeth rejoiced that she had been so often permitted to dance with her cousin Charles; and he, that he had been so little divided from her.

All in short were happy, except Clanalvon. He reached his chamber fatigued, and vexed with himself and every other person; he desired his servant to leave him, and paced the apartment with an agitated step.—"How unkind, how markedly unkind, was Emily Nugent's manner!" was his first reflection; but in thinking over the circumstances of her unkindness, he remembered that perhaps he had given cause for it; yet, if he had been wrong, how cruelly calm and composed was her whole appearance! No; she did not feel it; cold, heartless girl, she did not notice his apparent neglect of her. How sweetly mild and gentle was her tone as she bade him good-night—no feeling of pain or wounded affection; and calling her once more, in his own mind, "cold, capricious girl," he determined that women in general were so; and with this pleasing reflection he threw himself on his bed, where he spent the night in alternately condemning himself for his apparent neglect of Emily, and her for the tranquillity with which she seemed to bear it.

When the family assembled next morning, and were chatting round the breakfast-table, over the various little incidents of the preceding evening, lady Elizabeth asked her brother why he had danced so often with Miss Mansfield, saying it was very rude of him, when there were so many present, who, in every respect, had higher claims on his attention?

"She and her mother insisted on it," said Clanalvon, laughing.

"But you should not have suffered that flirting, scheming family to take possession of you, even for a moment," exclaimed Olivia, warmly.

"Well, I am sure no one suffered by it but myself," he replied. "I indeed was to be pitied for tying myself to the stupidest, most disagreeable, flirtish girl in the room, or I may say the country."

"No one suffered by it but yourself!" repeated Elizabeth, recollecting the dejected countenance of Emily Nugent.

Clanalvon felt her meaning, and tried to laugh it off.—"No," he said; "certainly no one else; whom did I injure?"

"In the first place, poor Miss Mansfield herself," said Olivia; "would you, Clanalvon, bear to see any man attend on me last night as you did on her, and speak of me this morning as you have spoken of her?"

"But I never saw you insist on any gentleman dancing with you, whether he would or not, and without much brotherly vanity, I may say you would not be quite so disagreeable a charge," answered he; "but if such was your habit for obtaining partners, I should think it extremely kind and self-sacrificing of any one, who particularly disliked you, to attend you the whole evening without betraying his misery."

"And Clanalvon," said Elizabeth, "was it kind and self-sacrificing of you to leave old Mr. Balfour, who has been so fond of you from infancy, so neglected, when he came on purpose to meet our family, because he could not come the night of our own ball?"

"Extremely good-natured, though not towards him particularly," replied Clanalvon, continuing a tone of forced gaiety; "I was enlivening dull souls who had no amusement in themselves, while I might have been enjoying the society of the pleasantest old fellow on earth."

"Oh, Clanalvon! Clanalvon!" said Olivia, reproachfully raising her eyes to his face, "how should he know you were making such a sacrifice?"

"And you know," rejoined Elizabeth, "how easily his feelings are hurt since the overturn of his fortune. You did not think of this, but that facile good-nature you indulge never does think."

"One would think, by all these reproaches," said lady Clanalvon, "that your brother had, for his own personal gratification, wounded the feelings of every person in the room, when the truth is, he has sacrificed his own pleasure to the feelings of an anxious mother."

"And good-naturedly," added Montague, laughing, "assisted that mother in making her daughter very ridiculous."

The sisters now endeavoured to change

the subject, Elizabeth fearing that her mother would rather strengthen him in his false ideas of good-nature; Olivia partly wishing to save him from every pain, partly doubting whether she must not be wrong in thinking he could be so. However, when he found himself alone with them, he renewed it by saying—"Do you really think, Lizzy, that I vexed dear old Mr. Balfour?"

"Indeed I do," she replied, "and what you must feel much more, Emily Nugent was seriously grieved by your neglect."

Clanalvon proudly waved his head, and with a voice of haughty assumed humility, he said—"Miss Nugent grieved by me!—oh no!—I dare not flatter myself with any power over her well-regulated feelings—oh no!—you are quite mistaken, Lizzy."

"Indeed I am not, Clanalvon, nor do you really in your heart think I am."

"You do not mean to say I trifled purposely with her feelings!" he exclaimed.

"No," replied Elizabeth, "I say and

believe you were led into wounding her by your weak good-nature towards Mrs. and Miss Mansfield; and conscious of wrong being on some side, wish to throw it off yourself on Emily; and you have succeeded in persuading yourself that necessity compelled you to neglect her, and that she was very unkind not to see this necessity."

Clanalvon coloured and smiled, as he hesitatingly said—"Not exactly; but, Lizzy, supposing it was my choice to leave her in that manner, was it not very cold and heartless of her not to be in the least vexed by it?" Observing his sisters smile at the meaning these words conveyed, he added—"She is so fond of my mother and you both, that a slight from any part of the family ought naturally to have hurt her."

"Undoubtedly," said Elizabeth, "it would have shewn a coldness very foreign to Emily's disposition, if she had not been hurt—but," she archly added, "less, of course, by a slight from you than from any other of the family. However, she really was very much hurt—I saw it clearly, and so did Charles, and I suspect also Robert Howard."

"I know he did," said Olivia, "for I never saw him so attentive to her, though not," she continued, with a laugh and a blush, "to the neglect of other people, like Clanalvon."

"She did look paler than usual," said Clanalvon, thoughtfully; "but there was not the slightest degree of agitation in her manner—she never once lost her composure."

"But Emily has a mind so steady, so well centered," answered Elizabeth, "that she may be deeply grieved, without being discomposed. Her feelings may have been like her countenance—more in sorrow than in anger."

Clanalvon started up—"And do you think, dearest Lizzy, that if I was to go to her now, she would be glad to see me? do you think Mrs. Nugent will be less markedly unkind than she was at the moment we parted? for I love her—I love Emily's aunt too well to endure any coldness from her."

Elizabeth was sure that Mrs. Nugent's gentle mind could not retain anger, however his neglect of her Emily might have given her a momentary feeling of resentment.

Without waiting for his horse, he pursued his way to Riversdale, with an agitation in which various feelings mingled; joy at his sister's insinuations of Emily's sentiments towards him—anger at himself for having been led into the appearance of neglecting her—and embarrassment how to speak of his conduct, where apology would be impertinent. But great was his disappointment to find only Mrs. Nugent. She had been detained at home by business, while Emily was gone to spend the morning with an old lady in ill health, whose principal pleasure was in her society. Mrs. Nugent was kind and gentle as ever in her own manner, but all his efforts could not lead her to speak of her niece as he wished; and after affectionately inquiring how his family were after the late ball they had been at, he could not bring her to mention the evening before.

A picture newly taken of Emily lay on the table; Clanalvon took it up; and as he recollected that she had been pained by him, tears filled his eyes. Mrs. Nugent did not seem to perceive it, and gently drawing the beautiful portrait from his hand, she put another into it, saying it was by a much superior master, and that, had he been in Ireland, she would have had Emily's likeness taken by him.

"Oh, Mrs. Nugent! let me keep that picture one moment longer," said Clanalvon, earnestly; but without seeming to hear him, she quietly replaced it in its case, and went on to speak on the subject of painting in general.

Clanalvon, so much admired for elegance of manner, and for the charm of intelligence or vivacity which he knew how to diffuse over the most common topics of conversation, was now equally at a loss to carry on that which his companion had chosen, to start another, or to end his embarrassment by shortening his visit. The arrival of another visitor, however, at length gave him an opportunity for the latter, and he hastened on foot to the house of the sick lady, five miles from Mrs. Nugent's place, to make inquiries for her, hoping there to meet Emily.

He did meet her, but only just coming out, and could only place her in her carriage. When she was seated there, Clanalvon continued to stand by it, and the footman was waiting for further orders. Emily coloured, and requested lord Clanalvon to tell his mother that their old friend was better; she then expected him to depart, and was silent for a moment; but finding that he still remained by the carriage, she blushed very deeply, bade him farewell, and desired the servant to drive home.

The day was now past when Clanalvon had intended to begin his journey to Dublin, to meet his guardian; and this day missed, no expedition could now bring him in time to settle business with sir James before his departure. This circumstance rejoiced Clanalvon, as it gave him an opportunity of more immediately regaining his former footing of intimacy with Mrs. and Miss Nugent; he could not, however, feel sufficient confidence of the place he held in the affection of Emily, to venture on an explicit declaration of his sentiments.

In this state of mutual though unavowed attachment, about a fortnight had passed away, when Emily, one morning, on entering a neighbouring cottage, to inquire after a sick child, was startled by the appearance of affliction in the mother.—"How is your little girl, Mary?" she asked, kindly.

"Oh! better, I thank you, Miss, but it's not her I'm thinking of; but he's gone out in great distress, and so am I myself, for that matter."

"Why, what has happened?" inquired

Emily, anxiously—"any thing I can assist you in?"

"Oh, bless your kind heart! what could you do more nor ourselves? Isn't it our poor dear young lord that's kilt!"

"Killed!"

"Oh! the life's in him yit, but he's ruint for ever."

"For Heaven's sake! tell me exactly," exclaimed Emily.

"Oh! don't be frightened, my dear, it's only a fall he's got, and his bones that's broke."

"How did you hear it? what did you hear exactly?—perhaps it is not true," said Emily, endeavouring to catch at hope.

"Aw, wasn't I down at Fagan's, getting a bit of thyme, to put in the broth for the child, for the pig rooted up all the erribs* in our own place, one day the boy left the door open on him—that wild chap Billy, you know, Miss——"

"Go on—pray tell me of lord Clanalvon."

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* Herbs.

"Amn't I, Miss, as fast as I can—sure wasn't it there I heard it? So, as I was telling you, Fagan's wife, she axed me to sit down; and so, as I was waiting for a handful of barley, for she tould me to put a grain of barley in the broth, Miss, I sees them running past, and thinks I, it's a mad dog they're after, for you know, Miss, there was a mad dog in the country this summer, but he done no harm though; so I runs out—'What's the matter?' says I, little thinking——oh! the dear young crature! it's himself that's good to rich and poor! So, as I was saying, Miss, one of them tould me—'Sure it's the young lord that's fell,' says he; and so I caught ahould o' Pat Fagan—'Ah! don't be cantering past,' says I, 'but stay, and tell me about it,' says I; so he up and tould me, myself doesn't know what, for I was all of a trimble; but any how he got a fall off that wild horse he was trying, for some young chap, that wanted to shew him off to one that was going to buy him, or something; any how, it was his goodness done it. At any rate, himself'll be in by-and-by, if you'll stop a bit, my dear, and I'll mend the fire, for you're as pale as a corp."

The moments which elapsed before the return of the husband were spent by Mrs. O'Beirne in efforts to comfort her benefactress, and prevent her from fainting; but on his appearance, the eagerness of expectation quite restored her, and she sprung forward, but failed of power to utter the inquiry she wished.

"You'll be waiting, Miss Nugent, to hear news of him that's dear to high and low," said Philip, as he entered.

"Well, Phil?" said the wife, in an inquiring tone.

Emily sunk back in her chair in breathless emotion, while he informed them that the young lord had broken his arm, and got some "bad confusions" in his head, which the surgeon thought a great deal more about; that he had been carried into the nearest cottage, where his alarmed family, who had been sent to, soon joined him, and that he was conveying home on a door attended by the surgeon.

Emily hastened home as fast as her trembling limbs could bear her, and there learned that her aunt had already heard the intelligence, and dispatched a discreet and rational servant, with orders to get an exact account from Mr. Montague, and to return with as little delay as possible.

The arrival of the messenger brought little relief to their agonizing suspense; the surgeon could not pronounce on the state of lord Clanalvon, and had sent for the assistance of a skilful army-surgeon, quartered at a neighbouring town.

Day after day brought answers equally unsatisfactory, until, on the morning of the fifth, Mrs. Nugent received a letter from Charles, conveying the joyful intelligence that Clanalvon's amendment was now so decided, that little doubt was entertained of his rapid recovery. The two succeeding days placed him entirely out of danger, and Mrs. Nugent then wrote to

Charles, requesting a particular account not only of the dear invalid, but of all the family, whose health, she feared, must have suffered by their anxiety.

This letter reached him as he sat by the couch to which Clanalvon had been for the first time removed, and where he lay surrounded by his mother, sisters, cousin, and Robert Howard, who had remained at the castle to assist in attending him. The mention of the name, as the servant delivered the letter, brought a vivid glow to his cheek. Montague read it aloud; and as he concluded with Mrs. Nugent's fear that a visit would yet be an intrusion, Clanalvon eagerly expressed his hope that she might be prevailed on to come and stay a few days at the castle, if his mother or Elizabeth would write to press her to do so.

This was readily agreed to, and Elizabeth rising to write the proposed note, Clanalvon, who feared that Mrs. Nugent might come alone, timidly suggested that she should say, that Olivia was so exhausted by her anxiety and nursetending, that she much needed the restorative of Emily's society.

"Yes," said lady Elizabeth, laughing; "I will tell her, that though Emily is, of course, too inexperienced a nursetender to be any use to you, she may contribute to revive Olivia's spirits."

This hope, while it remained in suspense, rather injured than served Clanalvon, as the restlessness it caused occasioned a slight return of fever; but having, before he was settled for the night, the satisfaction of knowing that the invitation would be accepted, and that he should see them the next day, he slept better than he had done since his accident, and he found himself considerably refreshed in the morning.

Great was the solicitude, and many the doubts of Mrs. Nugent, before she determined on the answer she sent. Emily was the child of Mr. Nugent's brother, and Mrs. Nugent's only sister, who, dying when her daughter was but an infant, consigned her to the care of her aunt, then a widow, who took up her residence with her brother-in-law. He was a clergyman, with a good living in England; but having no personal property, he left, at his death, which happened when Emily was about fourteen, only her mother's fortune of five or six thousand pounds. The loss of her fond father, the first affliction Emily had ever known, fell heavily on a constitution which, though healthful, was far from robust, and her spirits for some time were so crushed under it, that Mrs. Nugent felt a total change of scene desirable; her own affectionate heart also longed after her native country and the friends of her youth, and she accordingly commissioned a friend to purchase for her a residence, with a small portion of land, in that part of Ireland in which she had been brought up. She had been formerly intimate with lady Clanalvon, as well as with the family of her late lord, and it was with pleasure she found that her new property bordered on the lands of Clanalvon

Castle. Lady Clanalvon immediately visited her, and her wish to cultivate an intimacy was much increased by an introduction to Emily, whose innocent manners, interesting appearance, and extraordinary talents, first raised her admiration, and whose modest excellence, as it unfolded itself, soon commanded her affection and esteem.

The earl of Clanalvon, then between seventeen and eighteen, was, at their first acquaintance, absent on a tour through Scotland, with his tutor, and his cousin Montague; but on his return he anxiously desired to be introduced to the fair favourite at Clanalvon Castle, of whom his sisters had written with the warmest affection and praise. When he saw Emily, he was less struck by the beauty than by the expression of her form and face. It was not her features, formed in nature's finest mould, he loved to gaze on—it was the serenity which reigned on a forehead whose snowy fairness was emblematical of the pure candour which there seemed to deny the possibility of ought but truth,—it was the lustre of those eyes, whose bright expression varied from the smile of sportive playfulness, to fill with the tear of pity or of tenderness, or shed those radiant glances "which genius beams from beauty's eye"—it was the varying colour which changed with every changing emotion; the radiance which, when she smiled, seemed to illumine her whole countenance—it was the air of unaffected ease, which changed to that of diffidence, and seemed to shrink from admiration the moment it became apparent—it was that look where

> "Nature's legend so distinctly tells—
> In this fair shrine a fairer spirit dwells,"

that gave to Clanalvon an idea of those veiled treasures of mind, which the intimacy of friendship would bring to light; and for a long time their intimacy with each other seemed to be of the same character with that which subsisted between her and his sisters. Under this guise of friendship, he hung on all Emily's words and looks—found something in every observation she uttered superior to any thing he had ever heard on the same subject—entered into all her feelings—admired all she admired with double energy—loved as she loved—disliked as she disapproved.

Mrs. Nugent saw enough in this to make her fear that such fond endearing attentions, such apparent similarity of character, might create an interest in his favour in the heart of her niece, at the same time that she did not see enough to convince her, at his early age, that he had fixed his affections on her as the object of that exclusive attachment which would in that case be necessary to her happiness. The caresses of his family too created doubts on the subject—"Would lady Clanalvon," she thought, "so fond of rank and splendour, distinguish with so much partiality a girl who could add to neither, had she reason to apprehend that her son had any serious thoughts of making her his wife?"

In this she misjudged lady Clanalvon; she loved rank and splendour, it is true, but she felt he had enough of both; the elegance and loveliness of Emily had captivated her fancy, and she looked forward with complacency to the probability of presenting her to the world as her daughter-in-law.

After a summer passed in growing intimacy and affection between the families, the Clanalvons had removed to Dublin for the winter, and on their return, Emily, grown and improved in beauty, was lovelier than ever in the eyes of Clanalvon. Her regard for him too had strengthened during his absence. Through the winter she had been constant in her benevolent visits to the poor around; and in every cottage she entered she found the praises of their young lord the sweetest theme of each individual. Stories of his benevolence, his disinterested goodness—the kindness and generosity with which he relieved, by degrees became dearer to her than any other conversation with her patients; and by degrees she found that in the evening chat with her aunt, every other subject was dull until she had called forth her admiration, by repeating some of the traits she had heard of lord Clanalvon's excellence. When she received him on his return to the country, she felt herself conversing with a being superior to the pleasing and interesting youth with whom she had parted.

This intimacy had now continued for upwards of three years, during which the same appearance of devoted attachment continued increasing on the part of lord Clanalvon. He was now of age, and his silence on the subject was yet unbroken. The anxious aunt hardly knew how to act—on one hand she saw the danger of his daily gaining ground in the affections of her niece, without such an explicit declaration of his sentiments as could secure her against a disappointment, of which his conduct at Mrs. Mansfield's ball made her more than ever apprehensive; and in this view of the subject, prudence seemed to call on her to check the progress of an intimacy which might be attended with the most distressing consequences; but, on the other hand, a young man possessed of so many estimable and attractive qualities, whose mind seemed peculiarly calculated to appreciate that of her Emily—a place in a family so amiable—a coronet, and an estate of fifteen thousand a-year, were not objects to be sacrificed to a perhaps needless caution.

After some hours of anxious fluctuation, Mrs. Nugent was at last determined on accepting the invitation, by a consideration of the stability and rationality of Emily's character. She knew her to be incapable of the light and thoughtless fancies by which some girls are led to suppose themselves attached to any man who pays them marked attention, when, in fact, they rather love the assiduities than the lover. If Emily loved lord Clanalvon, her attachment was founded on approbation of his character, and this was a sentiment over which absence could have little influence; besides, so great was Emily's abhorrence of whatever was inconsistent with truth and honour, that if he should, without the provocation of any unkindness on her part, withdraw the appearance of devoted affection he had hitherto shewn her, the evil would in itself furnish its own best antidote; while, if an excuse for such a change was furnished, the generous and indulgent candour of her nature would not fail to plead it in his behalf.

Mrs. Nugent and Emily were welcomed in the hall of Clanalvon Castle by the joyful embraces of Elizabeth and Olivia, who conducted them to the apartment where their brother lay on a couch, from which he was still unable to rise. Lady Clanalvon, affectionately shocked at the pale and altered looks of Emily, and habitually more engaged with her own feelings than attentive to those of others, threw her arms around her, exclaiming—"My sweet girl, how pale you are grown! how thin!"

and kissed her with an emotion of fondness which shewed to what cause she attributed the alteration.

Agitated and confounded, Emily could only look to her aunt, who calmly observed—"We have both suffered much anxiety for our young friend, of whose danger we at first heard very exaggerated accounts, and Emily is not very strong."

While Clanalvon fervently grasped the hand of Emily, all traces of illness seemed lost in the animated but agitated joy which glowed on his countenance. He had heard his mother's observation—he had seen the embarrassment of Emily, and tenderly endeavoured to relieve it, by directing her attention to Olivia, whose health and spirits, he said, had been severely injured by her anxious nursetending.

Mrs. Nugent, kind, warm-hearted, gentle, and amiable, exerted herself to save, as much as was possible, the fatigue of the exhausted nursetenders; and the day after their arrival, Olivia was prevailed on, for the first time, to breathe the air in a short walk with Emily.

Elizabeth, feeling that her care would be long necessary to her brother, had, from the time her own anxiety permitted her, endeavoured, in every way, to prevent her strength and spirits failing, while they were needful to the beloved invalid. She was now, therefore, able to entertain and enliven him, while Olivia, who would not remit her anxious watch, sat pale and lifeless by his side, furnishing a new source of uneasiness to her mother and sister, as well as to the object of her solicitude.

To the restoration of her health and spirits, Emily devoted the most affectionate attention; she seemed to be the prime object of her visit, for never did a selfish wish to enjoy the conversation of Clanalvon, or to be herself the person who administered to his comfort or amusement, induce her to omit drawing Olivia from his apartment, and accompanying her in her walks and airings. But in her cares for her, Clanalvon was not forgotten; he was passionately fond of music—neither of his sisters sung—and it was his greatest delight to hang on the harmonious tones of Emily.

Every day, every hour, formed some new tie between them; and Mrs. Nugent now began to reproach herself for having ever feared for the steadiness of his attachment; it was now so unequivocally expressed in his whole manner, so visibly understood and approved by his family, that to doubt it was to doubt his honour and theirs; she also saw, though no longer with alarm, that Emily's heart was deeply engaged to him.

Never did an attachment seem formed under more happy auspices, or less exposed to the fluctuations to which human happiness is liable. Childish friendship had led to the intimacy by which they acquired a perfect knowledge of each other's character, and that knowledge led to the full and perfect union of heart which the friends

"But I am afraid," said Mrs. Nugent, "that such good-nature to Mr. Sutton was but little good-nature to the intended purchaser of the horse, for I believe he is a man very capable of imposition in a thing of the kind; nor would the price of a horse be a matter of importance to him, if he had not thrown away a good fortune at the gaming-table."

"But if young people," said lady Clanalvon, "were to weigh and examine every thing in that moralizing manner, all the fire and energy of youth would be extinguished."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Nugent; "we cannot expect young people to reflect as steadily as old ones, but we should endeavour to give them such just views of every subject as will enable them, when they do reflect, to judge correctly."

"Well," said lady Clanalvon, peevishly, "if he has acted so very wrongly as you seem to think, no one has suffered by it but himself."

"No one but himself, mamma!" exclaimed lady Elizabeth; "look at poor Olivia."

"And if," added Montague, "Clanalvon had succeeded in the leap, Mr. Jones would have suffered what he has done, instead of him, for the horse was certainly not equal to it, even if Clanalvon's horsemanship had brought him once through it."

"And do you suppose, Charles," cried lady Clanalvon, "that your cousin meant to impose on Mr. Jones?"

"No, indeed," replied Montague, laughing; "but I am very certain he never thought about it—he saw but one side of the question."

"You are right there, Charles," said Clanalvon.

"And so," resumed his mother, indignantly, "the fault which has occasioned all this lecturing is, that he did a good-natured action, frankly and generously, without pausing to consider on all the circumstances that might possibly be connected with it; and that his sister loved him so tenderly as to suffer in her health by her anxiety for his. One of his sisters, at least, shews that he possesses qualities capable of attaching her; and if there is a fault in that, it is Olivia's, not his."

"Her attachment cannot be stronger than he deserves," said Charles; "but, aunt, since you put the question, perhaps there was a fault in her manner of shewing it, for she harassed her delicate frame to a degree that often made Clanalvon uneasy, when tranquillity was of the utmost importance to him. I dare say she remembers herself one night I almost quarrelled with her, when he could not go to sleep from anxiety about her sitting up with him."

"I know I acted very foolishly," said Olivia; "I often staid with him when quite exhausted, merely to indulge my own feelings, when I was not in the least wanted, and was, in consequence, much less useful than either mamma or Lizzy. I know I cannot love him more than

Lizzy does; but I have less good sense and self-command."

"Or rather, my love, you have more sensibility," replied lady Clanalvon.

"My aunt," said Montague, "admires sensibility as a beautiful weakness, while Elizabeth rates it higher, and values it as a sentiment connected with the most solid principles."

Lady Clanalvon turned to Emily, and asked—"Does my sweet Emily, who has so much sensibility herself, condemn poor Clanalvon as much as the rest seem to do?"

"I do not believe," she answered, "that any one condemns him. That good-nature which flows spontaneously from a natural kindliness of disposition that delights in seeing every one pleased, all must consider a very amiable and very——" she was going to say "endearing quality," but dropped the words, and proceeded—"but yet it is not entitled to that higher praise which belongs to that more enlightened sentiment of benevolence, which, feeling for all, and overlooking none, must necessarily be inseparably connected with the strictest sense of justice: the one is only an amiable instinct, that may or may not mislead—the other is a solid principle of virtue; and I am sure it is in the first light lord Clanalvon himself regards this instance of his kindness."

"Certainly," said Clanalvon, who was ever sensible of truth from her lips, even when it militated against the bias of his education—"certainly, the good-nature which is not founded on justice is liable to injure one in serving another, or even to injure its immediate object."

"And this principle," said Mrs. Nugent, "should, by consideration, be rendered so habitual to the mind, that it can be acted on spontaneously."

But Clanalvon heard her not; his thoughts hung on Emily's observation, in which, it must be confessed, he contemplated rather the mental loveliness of her who uttered it, than the useful lesson to be derived from it.

Never had Clanalvon known a period of more perfect happiness than that in which he lay confined to a couch, suffering a considerable degree of bodily pain, but receiving from Emily those little kind attentions which sickness requires, enchanted by her conversation, soothed by her harmonious voice, or, when unable to enjoy either, cheered by the mere consciousness of her presence. His strength had been alarmingly reduced by the violent fever consequent on his hurts; and he scarcely ventured to acknowledge to himself its return, feeling as if any change would dissolve the charm which surrounded him; but by degrees his confinement grew irksome, as he became impatient to walk about at liberty, so as to obtain an opportunity of speaking with Emily alone.

Four weeks had passed at Clanalvon Castle before the Nugents returned home, and Clanalvon was then the avowed and accepted lover of Emily. Their marriage was determined on, and only waited for the return of sir James Gray, who had in his possession some necessary papers, which, not foreseeing that they might be wanted during his absence, and expecting till the last moment to see Clanalvon, he had neglected to send to him before his departure. Bitterly did the young lover now regret the indulgence of that sensibility which had led him to postpone his business with him, for the pleasure of dancing with Emily at a ball, and the fear of disappointing the scheming mother who gave it.

Once known, Emily Nugent must be loved—once loved, she must be loved for ever. Clanalvon felt this, as her increasing confidence in him removed the veil which had hitherto shaded many of her excellencies and attractions. Together they now visited the tenants who would soon become hers, and together they arranged plans for the happiness of those dependent on them. The life they proposed to lead was the most delightful mixture of seclusion and social intercourse

—of study and amusement; each thought that only the future could exceed their present happiness. Clanalvon could not think of any thing but as it was connected with her; in her his whole mind was wrapt up; and absent from her, he felt that every power of enjoyment would cease. His love—the affection of his family—the society of her aunt—so fond, so beloved—the power of being useful to her fellow-creatures—was all Emily desired, and she possessed it.

The period of Elizabeth's marriage with her cousin Charles Montague, could not as yet be ascertained. Though the only child of his mother, he possessed but a small younger son's portion, his father having had a large family by a former marriage. His destination was for the church, in which he had well-founded hopes of immediate provision, when he should have attained the age for ordination, of which he still wanted some months, and lady Clanalvon wished to defer his marriage with her daughter, until these hopes were realized, not thinking the interest of her fortune, which was about twenty thousand pounds, sufficient to support her in a style suitable to her education and early habits. Clanalvon, however, secretly determined to make such arrangements for them, as would reconcile his mother to their marriage taking place at the same time as his own.

Lady Clanalvon was not insensible to the consideration that her admired daughter might have made a much higher match, but she felt it a duty to suffer her children in marriage to follow their own unconfined choice; and in the case of Charles, her extreme attachment to his mother, her affection for himself, and the similarity she observed in his character to that of Elizabeth, coincided with this principle. She considered them both as worthy, sensible, well-principled, and warm-hearted, very deficient in that glowing energy of sensibility of which she was an adorer, and every way very well suited to each other.

Mrs. Nugent, who, though meek and gentle in her disposition, possessed a becoming pride in the ancient and illustrious family of her niece, felt it proper that she should be presented at court as Miss Nugent, before she appeared there as countess of Clanalvon. Lady Clanalvon also wished to present lady Elizabeth (for Olivia was yet too young) before she was sunk into a parson's wife, and longed to do the honours of her son's splendid and newly-furnished house in town, before another should become its mistress. It was therefore determined that both families should remove to Dublin for the winter.

Many a tearful eye followed the carriage which bore Miss Nugent from her home; her dependants confessed this was very selfish in them, when she was going to enjoy herself, but still the tears continued to flow. Emily afterwards said it was a presentiment of the meeting they were next destined to have..

Gaily the aunt and niece proceeded on a journey, in which every prospect of pleasure seemed opening to them. Emily believed she could not be happier than she had been in the country, but yet, with unaffected simplicity and youthful vivacity, she suffered her animated fancy to look forward with pleasure to the amusements of novelty and variety, which did not separate her from the persons most dear to her heart.

The first evening they spent in Dublin seemed a happy beginning of their stay there. Lord Clanalvon came to inquire if they were arrived, and remained with them, until Mrs. Nugent playfully reminded him that such unpractised travellers as she and Emily required rest. The look of fixed tenderness with which her lover then regarded her was long after remembered by Emily.

Few people were yet collected in Dublin, and for several days the families of Clanalvon and Nugent were all to each other. Charles Montague might almoſt be called a member of the former; for though he had lodgings in town, and occasionally separate engagements, the greater part of every day was spent with them.

The family of lord Howard was among the first of their acquaintance who came to town, and their arrival rather enlarged the family circle than changed the style of amusement, for neither lord or lady Howard deigned to leave their own house, except on very magnificent occasions; and it was the delight of Robert, their only grown-up child, to mix as if he were already one of Olivia Fitzmaurice's family; indeed, had he not loved her, and he did love her with all the warm enthusiasm of his soul, Howard would have found more pleasure in their house than in any other place, for his affection and admiration for Clanalvon were absolutely unbounded; his saying a thing was right, in Robert's opinion made it so; and a glance from him could at any time check his enthusiastic friend from the pursuit of the object he most wildly wished to attain, for Clanalvon looked to him to stop, and it must be wrong.

His was a mind which might have been made any thing, and which had, until his intimacy with the Clanalvons, been wholly uncultivated. It was now filled with brilliant but unarranged and immatured ideas of love, honour, friendship, patriotism, which displayed a naturally fine and noble character; and with a degree of almost fierce bravery, he possessed a degree of softness and tenderness of heart not often excelled by woman. Lady Olivia, who had never thought of love but in the forms of natural affection, friendship, or general benevolence, loved him, without having ever weighed her own sentiments towards him; he was conscious of it, and thought he could not better deserve her attachment than by following wherever her brother led.

One morning, when Clanalvon came to Mrs. Nugent's house, Emily, who received him alone, remarked the more than common pleasure and animation which sparkled in his countenance; her eyes brightened with a corresponding emotion, and a look of inquiry encouraged him to proceed—"Emily," he said, "you know I must have no secrets from you—I feel very happy to-day, for I have relieved a distressed fellow-creature."

"The happiest of all feelings," replied Emily.

"It is that unfortunate Sutton; I have just found that he has a brother in prison for a debt which he can never pay, and which, I understand, this poor fellow is endeavouring to save up for him; but he never can, if he were to half-starve himself."

Emily smiled, and tears of delighted admiration of the generous action she foresaw he was about to relate, filled her eyes—"And you have released him?" said she.

"Yes, I have given a promissory note for the amount of the debt, which is two thousand pounds."

She started at the magnitude of the sum, and asked—"But can you afford it, and are you sure you are not imposed on?

Is Mr. Sutton a man who would really intend to save to such an extent for his brother?"

"For that I cannot answer," said Clanalvon, blushing; "but I have been told so, and it is not at all impossible, for he is a very good-natured fellow, with all his faults. That brother is always in scrapes, and he has helped him out of two or three before this."

"Good-nature can go great lengths," said Emily, with one of her sweetest smiles.

"As to the expence," he continued, "you know I afforded a hundred pounds yesterday for a horse, and four hundred, a few days ago, for a phæton, and shall I not afford four times as much to save a fellow-creature's life? As to the danger of my income not reaching all this extravagance, do not fear; for sir James Gray is such a teazing cautious old man, though the most warm-hearted friendly being on earth, that I never mind half what he says."

Accustomed to the management of a small income, Emily could scarcely conceive a fortune large enough to bear such enormous expenditure; but as she knew that the Clanalvon estates were immense, she cordially approved the liberality of her lover, and forbore to cast a cloud over his worthily-gratified feelings.

"Then," resumed he, "since you do not think I have acted foolishly, I have something else to tell you."

"Observe," said Emily, laughing, "I have not said that you have acted wisely."

"Had my Emily been with me, she would have prompted all I did." He then related to her, that while arranging the business for Sutton, he observed a prisoner in the same room, who was confined for a debt of about five hundred pounds, contracted under circumstances of peculiar distress. This prisoner, on hearing of his large fortune, cast such a look of agitated doubtful emotion towards him, that he could not, for his life, as he said, forbear realizing the hope that had for a moment banished the pallid hue of dejection from his countenance. There was another also, a woman and a widow, whom he found it impossible not to release for the trifling sum of fifty pounds. He concluded his narrative by observing, that 'the whole amount, prison fees and all, fell considerably short of three thousand pounds.

"It is a large sum," said Emily, thoughtfully, "and nobly bestowed. I have no right to say it is too large, because I do not precisely know what your circumstances are; but remember that your heedlessness on the subject has left you nearly as ignorant as I am; and if it should prove that this sum was spent unworthily, and that hereafter some really-deserving object should want a small proportion of it, when you have it not to give, I know you will wish you had been more cautious. Your heart is too liberal," she added, affectionately smiling, "for those who love you not to feel pain in seeing your purse too lavishly emptied."

The conversation was for some time

carried on between them by observations on the public benefit which might be derived from that regular and even economy in the expenditure of a large fortune, which at once furnishes a steady source of profit to industry, and leaves a supply ready for every emergency; and Clanalvon felt and uttered sentiments on the subject as prudent as they were generous, because he now viewed it through the medium of his own and his Emily's reason, and not through that of a sensibility too easily acted on.

Lady Clanalvon was now exulting in the midst of the delightful bustle of preparation for her own and daughter's presentation at the drawing-room, expence and fancy being only checked by the consideration of the necessity of leaving, in the magazines of taste, something still more splendid for their appearance on the birthnight. The greater part of her mornings was spent in shopping, the rest in sitting at the milliner's, repeating her orders, or suggesting alterations; and the conversation or book of the evening was frequently interrupted by the sudden recollection of something that might improve the effect, and Elizabeth as frequently chidden for her apathy on a subject into which she had at first entered with the pleasure natural to her age, but of which she soon became completely weary.

Very different was the mode of preparation adopted by Mrs. Nugent and Emily, who had devoted one morning to making their purchases; and after concise but judicious directions, consigned the important affair to the discretion of the most established milliner, calling occasionally to ascertain that all would be ready in proper time. In their orders for Emily's dress, they endeavoured to observe a due medium between the smallness of her fortune and greatness of her prospects—neither liable to be censured as too extravagant for the one, or deficient in whatever might be considered suitable to the other.

Great was the triumph of lady Clanalvon, when she heard in the circle around her the whispered praises of her own fine form, the beauty of her daughter and intended daughter-in-law, and the manly graces of her son; and every smile which the praise of her beautiful Elizabeth called to her lips was followed by another, raised by the secret consciousness of the still higher admiration which would be excited by her still more beautiful Olivia.

Clanalvon's attentions were entirely devoted to his chosen bride, and he thought that scarcely even when she hung over his couch at Clanalvon Castle had she looked so lovely as she now did, animated but not elated by the gay scene surrounding her—pleased by the admiration she excited, as she saw it gave him pleasure—as much gratified by that bestowed on his sister as on herself—enjoying the brilliancy and variety so new to her, yet in her whole manner timidly indicating that his conversation, his attention, gave her more pleasure than all beside. Never had he felt with more tranquil assurance the certainty that she loved him.

This night Emily was surprised and rejoiced to meet a young lady, to whom she had once been much attached; it was Miss Hazlewood, the only daughter, and now the heiress of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Mr. Nugent's living in England, at whose house the infancy of Emily had passed some of its happiest hours. When she blushingly introduced lord Clanalvon to Miss Hazlewood, he thought she was almost ugly; but as Emily continued near her, and he was obliged to notice her, he saw her face illumining gradually, until in the end of the evening he gratified her friend by thinking her beautiful. Her manners were timid, but graceful and attractive; her whole appearance calculated to inspire interest rather than admiration. She seemed unhappy; and Emily, in the full enjoyment of life herself, peculiarly felt for those whose lot appeared less fortunate.

"I met Miss Hazlewood constantly last winter, and never noticed her until last night. Emily, I shall grow yet more ambitious of your affection, if I find it thus throws a lustre over all who possess it," said Clanalvon, playfully, when he came to see Emily next morning.

"I loved Cecilia Hazlewood, when we were children, more than I can tell you," replied Emily; "she is about three years older than me, and I used to consider her quite as a superior being—so generous, so soft, so exquisitely alive to feelings both of joy and sorrow, so warm and constant in her affection; in short, I scarcely ever met a mind so interesting, or a character so poetical—so much what one imagines of the heroines of poetry and romance."

Just as she finished speaking, and Clanalvon was thinking what was the magic charm which hung on every word that fell from her lips, Miss Hazlewood entered. She hung on Emily with fondling expressions of tenderness and joy at being reunited to her, without seeming conscious of the presence of a third person, until Emily recalled her recollection of it by saying—"I believe I introduced lord Clanalvon to you last night?"

Lord Clanalvon, interested by her enthusiastic fondness for his Emily, soon drew her into conversation; she joined in it with a brilliancy and animation which surprised them both, the pensive languor of her manner making it wholly unexpected; but there was apparent in all her sentiments a weak helplessness, a leaning upon others, inconsistent with the energy of character of which the force of her expressions upon some occasions conveyed the idea.

Before she went, Clanalvon was obliged to leave them, to keep an appointment with Robert Howard.—"Oh, Emily! you are happy!" exclaimed Miss Hazlewood, sighing; "you seem so universally beloved."

"I am very happy," replied Emily; "I have every reason to be so."

"Such society as you enjoy—such intercourse of mind!" continued Miss Hazlewood; "you are surrounded by those who can understand you—who value you. How many eyes I saw last night turned with affectionate delight on you, watching the admiration you excited! while I ——." She paused, raised her eyes, and sighed again.

"My dear Cecilia," said Emily, kindly, "come to us constantly—my aunt will always be delighted to have you here, and believe me, when you are with us, you are with those who truly love and value you. Do give us much of your society. I am a stranger to you now, but you loved me formerly; and my feelings are not changed, nor are those of my aunt, to whom you were once so much attached. Do promise me, dearest Cecilia, to dine with us to-morrow."

Miss Hazlewood gratefully promised.

"And," added Emily, "we shall introduce you to the ladies Fitzmaurice, and their mother and cousin—they are indeed a delightful family, and I am sure you will all like each other; you cannot know them, as lady Clanalvon is only this year bringing her daughter into company."

"Is lord Clanalvon their cousin?" asked Miss Hazlewood, carelessly, as if interrupted in the course of her thoughts.

"No, their brother," replied Emily; "I never saw brothers and sisters so attached."

"I never had a brother or sister," Cecilia said; "I never had a companion I loved since I lost you."

"Nor had I, Cecilia, except my aunt, until I knew the Fitzmaurices, and to-morrow you shall know them also," said Emily.

"I fear," replied Miss Hazlewood, with a melancholy smile, "I fear, my dear Emily, I have no longer your power of enjoyment. I do not think the most joyous event could now give me the pleasure which in our childish days I found in the merest trifles."

"Is it the death of your father that has thus broken your spirits?" asked Emily, tenderly; "I have lost one as kind, as dear, yet I am cheerful and happy;" her voice faltered, and tears filled her eyes as she spoke.

"I loved—adored my father!" replied Cecilia, energetically; "but it is not his death which thus oppresses me; perhaps it ought to be, but it is not."

"Dear Cecilia," said Emily, kindly laying her hand on hers, "I do not wish to press upon your confidence; but if it will relieve you to communicate your sorrows to a friend, tell me what is this hidden affliction?"

The question embarrassed Cecilia, who, after a moment's hesitation, said—"I have no real affliction, no actual cause of sorrow; but then I have no source of happiness, and surely affliction itself is preferable to the dreary vacuity of perfect blank."

"But you live with worthy amiable people, who love you with parental affection: is there no pleasure in making them happy?"

"Yes, they are very good and very kind: I love them both, and should be very sorry that any thing should give them pain, but they have not the sort of minds that mine could sympathize with. I am always tired of their society, and they never seem to enjoy mine."

"They have no great reason," said Emily, laughing, "if you are tired of theirs; but could you not, by the exertion of your charming talents, amuse them even in amusing yourself?"

"I do play and sing for them sometimes, but think how wearisome it must be to me to perform for people who have no taste! you know how passionately fond my father was of music, and with what nicety of judgment and ecstacy of delight he used to hang on his darling Cecilia's voice: my drawing too, and every thing he delighted in, seem thrown away upon them."

Emily thought that so she might have felt, but for the dear affectionate aunt, who loved her as tenderly as her father had done. After a moment's pause, she asked —"Are they not indulgent to you? Do they not allow you to have company at home, or to go out whenever you please?"

"Oh yes, all that kind of thing; but then there has been no one I particularly liked—no one I wished to see, and I have no enjoyment in company merely for its own sake, when there is no one there that I care to meet."

"But, dear Cecilia, does not your immense fortune alone open to you a source of the noblest enjoyments? Consider all the good you may do—all the happiness you may diffuse by means of it."

"That would indeed be delightful in the country," said Cecilia, brightening, for her heart was really benevolent—"to live surrounded by my own tenantry—to visit them in their cottages; health and plenty, content and cheerfulness, following my steps—to be looked up to as the benefactress, the guardian angel, of a happy community flourishing by my care! But in town, you know, that kind of thing is impossible, the poor are so nasty, and live in such odious places."

"Certainly in Dublin," said Emily, "there is so much imposition practised on the inexperienced, that you perhaps would give your money to more advantage through the hands of others; but with your ideas of happiness in the country, such an amiable, such a useful plan of happiness, why do you not fix your residence on your own estate?"

"I hope to do so next summer, when I shall be of age," answered Miss Hazlewood; "but even then it will be only living for the happiness of others. I shall have no social circle to form a happiness for myself—no one to love me above all others, as your aunt, for instance, does you—no corresponding mind which can unite with mine in the same pursuits, the same pleasures, the same sorrows, the same tastes."

"Ah, my dear Cecilia!" interrupted Emily, "I fear you have set your views of happiness too high; you cannot find happiness in any thing, because you look for more than any thing can afford; far from happiness, not even content, can be found in this fluctuating and imperfect state of things; but by cheerfully taking the evil with the good, there is no happiness here so perfect as to be without a cloud, and when we are placed, as you certainly are, in the sunshine of life, if we suffer that cloud to intercept our view of it, we are unhappy, rather from our own fault than from the want of means to be otherwise."

This was the true secret of Miss Hazlewood's unhappiness. She had formed visionary views of earthly felicity so bright, so highly coloured, that every thing real seemed dim and faded in the comparison. Like every generous and susceptible heart, hers valued highly the pleasures of friendship, but placed the requisites for it so far above all human perfection, that she never enjoyed it. The slightest prejudice against a person's look or manner made her give up the idea of finding in them any thing to love; yet still she felt that she could ardently love, could she find an object worthy of her affection. In her father she had formerly found this object, and his fond idolatry of his only child had greatly contributed to the errors of her character; he could find no fault in her, and taught her to believe that none existed, so that all her sentiments and feelings passed through her mind unweighed and unexamined; in his death, the loss of his fond admiration, his watchful indulgence, that even outran his wishes, left that void in her heart that now preyed on her spirits. In Emily Nugent she might have hoped to find the friend she sought, for in her every thing external combined to give that charm which her mind required, to call forth the feelings due to the worth her reason and principles acknowledged; but she feared that her affections were already too much divided, and a selfishness, which she cherished as sensibility, demanded even in friendship an exclusive attachment. The fastidious delicacy which can only love where every thing coincides to please, and is revolted by every defect, whether it is the cause or effect of selfishness, is never failingly accompanied by it; free disinterested affection can love what is valuable or attaching, and glances with indulgent eyes over what is defective; but self-love delights only in what pleases self, and is more properly the preference of taste than of real affection.

The selfishness of Cecilia was the effect rather of education than of natural disposition; her quick and lively sensibility, instead of being directed to the consideration of the feelings of others, was, by imprudent indulgence, turned wholly on herself, and became a refined species of selfishness, so subtle, and so ready to find its own pleasure in seeing others pleased, that it escaped her own observation. She was too just, too upright, knowingly to sacrifice the interests or comforts of others to her own; but her feelings, though ardent when aroused, were inert, and did not act until they were acted upon; consequently, on every occasion, she saw but one side of the question; whatever object caught her fancy she pursued with ardour, while no monitor within her own breast started up to warn her that she was crossing the path of another.

When she went to keep her engagement with Emily, she was rejoiced to find only the aunt and niece; but in the evening the entrance of the whole Clanalvon family and Mr. Howard put to flight the bright idea she was just beginning to form, that Emily had purposely not asked any other person, in order to have more exclusively her society; as the introductions were made, however, not one fault did she see in the appearance of these friends; with lady Clanalvon she was quite enchanted; and again her countenance beamed that bright expressive smile which Emily delightedly received, as a proof of her admiration of her new acquaintance.

Clanalvon seated himself between Miss Hazlewood and Emily; lady Olivia was on the other side of the former, and with her Cecilia's fancy was charmed, as with her mother.

Cecilia's talent for music had long remained unexerted, and now she joined her lovely voice with that of Emily, seemingly unconscious of the admiration with which others hung upon her tones. Her own soul dwelt on them, and on those of Emily, with a rapture of musical enthusiasm which excluded every other feeling. She sung without appearing to remember that any person was present, except her whose feathery touch flew over the harp, and whose melodious voice mingled its sweetness with her own, until the delighted applause of Clanalvon, making her turn her eyes to his animated countenance, gave a new impulse to her awakened feelings, and made her wish for conversation. She stopped—she would sing no more; and they fell into an animated discussion of the powers of music, which soon led them into other fields of literature.

The party round the harp consisted of the two ladies Fitzmaurice, Cecilia, Emily, Clanalvon, Charles, Howard, and some other young people.

At a little distance from them, Mrs. Nugent and lady Clanalvon were engaged in conversation with some elder ladies, among whom Mrs. Hastings (the wife of Cecilia's guardian) was not, as indisposition prevented her accepting Mrs. Nugent's invitation.

"How sweetly Miss Hazlewood sings! She is a lovely, attractive creature!"

"She is indeed a most amiable and pleasing little girl," replied Mrs. Nugent; "and I am sure will make a most excellent wife, whenever she marries."

"With her immense fortune," a lady observed, "I wonder she has been allowed to grow up disengaged."

"Oh," exclaimed lady Clanalvon, "I do not think wealth could make any difference—I do not believe the world to be so mercenary! What is this wonder-working fortune that can enhance the charms of Miss Hazlewood?"

"Ten thousand a-year," replied Mrs. Nugent.

"It is a splendid fortune," said lady Clanalvon; "but surely in marriage, fortune and rank, and things of that sort, ought not to be considered. I have not considered them with my children. Elizabeth will marry a Mr. Montague," laying a strong emphasis on the word Mr. "a younger brother, a man of no fortune; and, with my most glad consent, my son will marry a portionless girl."

"That girl is a Nugent," said a friend of that family, reddening, "and on whom could a Nugent more properly bestow her hand than on a Fitzmaurice?"

"And on whom," added Mrs. Nugent, smiling, "should an Emily Nugent bestow it but on such a Fitzmaurice?"

"Your ladyship," said a maiden cousin of Charles's father, drawing herself up, "your ladyship, in speaking of Mr. Montague, seems to forget, that he is descended from the most ancient families of England and Ireland; and that, though not an earl, he is of a family as high, in most of its branches, as that of Fitzmaurice—a family of which some individuals have before now refused earls; and that he is possessed in himself of merit, abilities, and personal advantages, which might entitle him, if his heart were not otherwise engaged, to aspire even to the wealthy and accomplished heiress, Miss Hazlewood."

Lady Clanalvon, somewhat piqued, replied—"If all parties were disengaged, it would appear that Miss Hazlewood might make a different selection," glancing her eyes triumphantly on her son.

Mrs. Nugent, startled at the suggestion, directed hers to the face of her niece, and saw there such a mixture of animated pleasure and soft serenity, as instantly calmed the newly-awakened doubt.

Emily saw Clanalvon appearing to the highest advantage; she saw her dejected friend brightened into the most glowing animation; she saw smiles and cheerfulness all around her, and her own happy heart and brilliant eyes reflected the expression. Never did a flutter of gaiety untune her voice, or agitate her look or manner; and at this moment, in the full flow of youthful vivacity, her countenance, as she returned the smile of her aunt, conveyed the fullest idea of Thomson's beautiful expression—"animated peace."

After the departure of Miss Hazlewood, all the company united in admiration of her talents and manners, and in concern for the visible dejection that at times obscured them, which was attributed to the loss of her father, who had been for four years her only parent.

Clanalvon expressed much delight in the pleasure she seemed to receive from the circle she was now introduced to, telling Emily that her friend had secured a high place in his regard, by the fervent affection she expressed for her; he also observed with admiration that she appeared perfectly free from the spirit of rivalry so common among young ladies, and seemed as much gratified by the applause given to Emily's musical powers as to her own.

The Clanalvons, Nugents, and Cecilia, met again in a larger company, the following night, and here Clanalvon introduced to his party lord Belville, a young man in whose manners every attraction of every country were gracefully and pleasingly combined. He had travelled much, and his information, though not deep, was extensive; he possessed great knowledge of the world, and an astonishing insight into character.

Clanalvon was captivated with his new acquaintance, and in one half-hour's conversation lord Belville saw his ruling foible. He introduced him to his father and mother, the earl of Dormer and his fascinating lady, who, resembling her son in beauty and in manner, like him won the admiration and enchanted the fancy of Clanalvon. He called on them the next day, was invited to dinner, and commenced an intimacy with a family of whose morals and principles he knew nothing, for he angrily refused to listen to any advice on the subject, feeling it an ungenerous caution to doubt merit, where all in the exterior was pleasing and attractive.

One evening, when he called on his new friend to accompany him to a party where both were engaged, he was shewn into a drawing-room, where he found lady Dormer alone, and in an agony of tears. His feelings prompted him to inquire the cause of them, but he only said he feared he had been admitted by mistake, and was going.

Lady Dormer raised her head.—"Oh, do not—do not go," she cried; "perhaps you will stop my tears. I know you can, and I hope you will."

Clanalvon assured her there was not any thing he would not do for a family so loved and respected.

"Then it is only," said she, "to follow

Belville, and bring him back to me. Oh, do not refuse! his father is furious, and I know my child will follow you."

With a brightened countenance, Clanalvon inquired where he should find lord Belville?

"He is with his club," replied the mother. "Unfortunate boy! that club will be his ruin, and he has no one to save him—not one friend to prevent his destruction! Oh, lord Clanalvon! if you—you, whom he loves so affectionately—whose principles—whose understanding, he respects so highly—if you would undertake to save my child!—if you would be his guardian angel!—if you would watch over him, and gently lead him from the path he is now pursuing!"

"Surely lord Dormer, his father," Clanalvon began.

"Oh, has not Belville told you the terms we live on?" said lady Dormer. "Some little errors of his in London had nearly caused a separation, and on my consenting to remain, lord Dormer promised never to interfere with our child, and rigidly has he kept his promise. He would see that boy at ruin's brink, and would not speak one word to save him from it. But, dear lord Clanalvon, go to my boy; you will be father, brother, every thing to him!"

Clanalvon promised, and at one-and-twenty he became the guardian of a young man two years older, who was deeply and irrecoverably plunged in every species of vice.

When he reached the club-house, he went into a room where a number of young men were assembled. Among them he quickly found the object of his search: the dice-box was in his hand, and as Clanalvon entered the room, he heard him, in a voice of agony, bet thousands on the throw. He lost, and turning from the table, his eyes met those of Clanalvon.—"Come here, Belville," he said, drawing him aside, "what have you lost?"

"What I can never pay," cried Belville, wildly; "and I will not live a disgraced debtor!"

"Stop!" said Clanalvon, as he was rushing past him; "stop, Belville! what is your debt?"

"My debt here is five thousand pounds, and but for it I might have paid my thousand other debts; but no matter, it will be settled soon! I will not live a debtor!"

"No, you shall not," said Clanalvon; "allow me to give this gentleman any security for the debt."

Lord Belville's expressions of gratitude were fervent.

The gentleman to whom the debt was contracted refused to take any other security from lord Clanalvon than his word, and this was joyfully given to save his friend.

"Clanalvon, I am not happy yet!—I cannot repay you!—I am still wretched!" said Belville.

"No, no, I will repay myself; I will try my chance at hazard," cried Clanalvon, at the moment only alive to the desire of calming Belville's mind. He won a few hundreds, and when about to withdraw, was loudly called on to give the loser another chance. Ashamed to rise a winner, and yet refuse satisfaction, but at the same time anxious to bring Belville home to his mother, he promised to meet them again next evening, positively declaring it should be the last time, whether he won or lost. He accordingly kept his engagement, and in a few hours lost two thousand pounds, for which he had not even received the compensation of amusement, the feelings excited by a gaming-table being far from consonant to his taste.

For a few days he kept his resolution of attending it no more, but lord Belville and his wily mother were not to be easily loosed from the prey on which they had fastened.

Lord Dormer, at the time to which her ladyship had alluded in London, had paid debts to a large amount for his son, and then peremptorily declared, that if ever he had another shilling of debt to pay for him, he would not only contract within very narrow bounds the ample allowance he now gave him, but would by will cut him off from all participation in his property, except that which was by settlement placed beyond his power. Debts, however, he again contracted, and resorted to the gaming-table, rather for the purpose of discharging them, than from any pleasure he found in it.

With this object in view, he continually wrought upon the generous feelings of Clanalvon, with representations of the wound he felt it to his honour to owe him a debt he could not pay.

Lady Dormer, at the same time, assailed him with her fears that the nice and susceptible honour of her son would lead him to ruin himself by disclosing all to his father, until they persuaded him to think that it would be taking an unhandsome advantage of the obligations he had laid them under, if he refused to let Belville free himself from them by the only means he saw within his power; and he soon lost to him not only the five thousand pounds he had lent, but three thousand more.

Nor was this all. Lady Dormer had frequently bills to pay, for which she had not money in hand: her next quarter of pin-money would soon be due, but after what had passed between her lord and her, she could not ask it until the exact day. She was ashamed to expose him by asking to borrow from any one, but the dear friend whose kindness had already made him so intimately acquainted with her family affairs; and eloquently expatiating on the cruelty of making poor tradespeople wait for their bills, she often drew from Clanalvon the money which ought to have gone for the payment of his own.

He had too much good sense not to see in all this something calculated to excite suspicion, but suspicion was abhorrent to his frank and open nature.—“Perhaps,” thought he, "vexation for the loss of so much money may incline me to see things through a false medium, and lead me to consider as manœuvre what is only the effect of necessity: those who are losers by the conduct of others can never be candid judges."

Though this reasoning in some measure satisfied his own mind, it could not give him courage to communicate the circumstances to Emily; for though in her

> "Virtue glowed
> In all her smiles, without forbidding pride,"

there was a clearness in her judgment, which, almost unconsciously to himself, he feared would place the characters of his new friends in a light which must destroy the pleasure he found in their fascinating manners, and ardent expressions of gratitude and esteem towards him.

Something of the same sentiment kept him silent on the subject to Elizabeth and Montague. They all saw with pain that his evenings were less uniformly devoted to love and family intercourse than formerly, but none of them knew the cause, any farther than that he was engaged in parties with Belville. But as these absences never took place when the two families were united without company, and as some part of every day was devoted to Emily, with all the ardour of unabated love, there was nothing in his conduct of which she could justly complain. She had too much prudence to trammel him in the bonds of jealous tenderness, and was not aware that his time was occupied in a manner injurious to himself.

From fear of his father, lord Belville had taken precautions to prevent his frequent visits to the gaming-table being generally known; and a promise of secrecy which he drew from Clanalvon baffled all the efforts of Montague to learn the truth from him. But at length the vigilance of Montague discovered it, and he pointed out to his cousin the base and selfish passions which must agitate the heart of a gamester, in a strain of such manly eloquence as led Clanalvon to shudder at the idea that he had been induced, even by inadvertency and motives of kindness, to assume the semblance of such a character; but this character he could not bring himself to believe was Belville's; in his attractive manners he thought he saw a mind formed for better things, and to these he hoped his influence might guide him. To Charles he would not communicate his hopes, as he was aware that he saw Belville in a very different light; the intimacy was therefore continued, but Clanalvon now steadily refused to accompany him to the gaming-table; and Belville, who knew "to shift with every shifting of the scene," cherished his hopes of effecting a reformation in him, and engaged him in promises for large sums, in order to enable him to withdraw honourably.

While Clanalvon was thus lavishing thousands on the worthless and deceitful, the deserving and industrious shared also largely in his liberality. Many respectable tradesmen were by his assistance enabled to overcome difficulties which would otherwise have ruined them, and many others owed to his bounty and active exertions in their favour, their first establishment in business. Many young men of fashion were stopped in their first entrance on a ruinous course, by his paying for them trifling debts, that they dared not avow to their parents, on receiving their promise not to incur more; at the same time he indulged the vanity of his mother, by an establishment and style of entertainment in which no allowance was made for his other extensive sources of expenditure.

In vain Montague and Elizabeth warned him that such extravagance must defeat all his plans of benevolence for his tenantry and country neighbourhood—in vain they reminded him that sir James Gray had often said that the savings of the minority would not fully extend to the payment of his father's debts, to which he had pledged himself at the age of eighteen; and that the deficiency there would be greater than sir James had foreseen, as a person who owed the property a large sum had lately failed—the first object that touched his feelings put to flight all the resolutions of caution which their advice had given birth to; and the fond applause of his mother, and the delighted smiles of Olivia, whenever any of his benevolent actions came to their knowledge, seemed in his mind to throw an air of coldness over the counsels of his more rational friend and sister.

Emily's applauses, and Emily's smiles, also, had encouraged him in the beginning, when she saw only the benevolence, and was not aware of the consequences; but at length, warned of these by Elizabeth, she exerted all her influence to convince him, that the liberality which is unbounded must necessarily be transient, and succeeded in checking his profusion, but not until after it had gone lengths which, on reflection, alarmed him for the future.

Soon, however, he was again ensnared into new expences. He and Howard dined at lord Dormer's, whence they and Belville were to go together to a ball, at which the Clanalvon ladies and Mrs. and Miss Nugent were to be. The beginning of the evening passed pleasantly, and nothing occurred to awaken the prudence of Clanalvon, until, at the moment the three young men went out of the hall-door, lord Belville observed that they were too early yet for a ball, adding, that he had unfortunately got himself engaged in a promise to meet a friend at the club-room; that his resolution against gaming was now so fixed, that he hoped there was no danger of his being tempted to the table; but it would be his certain security if Clanalvon and Howard would go with him, and he would not detain them more than ten minutes, while he just spoke on the business for which his friend wished to meet him.

To Clanalvon's expostulation, why he did not appoint some other place of meeting? he carelessly answered—"My dear fellow, you will find it is just the same thing—I know I am quite safe."

They accordingly accompanied him—the gentleman was not come, but Belville requested them to wait, as he said he was in general very punctual, and might certainly be expected in a few minutes.

After some time, during which lord Belville frequently looked at his watch, and assumed all the attitudes of impatience, he took up the dice-box, and proposed a few throws amongst themselves, merely *pour passer le tems.* Clanalvon peremptorily declined it, and his old acquaintance, captain Sutton, who was there, observed that he was much in the right, saying that he believed he had intelligence to communicate more interesting to feelings such as his lordship's, than a dice-box could be. He then drew him aside, to tell him the beneficial effect his generous conduct had had on the character of his brother; and entered into such minute particulars of his present sentiments, his gratitude, his plans, and his prospects, that nearly an hour had passed away before he was aware of it.

Starting, at length, at the recollection that Emily might be waiting for him at the ball, he rose to join his companions, and found Howard rattling his dice-box in the full spirit of the game. Shocked at the sight, he stepped angrily forward to Belville, who was also playing; but, prepared to be beforehand with him, Belville rose to meet him, and interrupting his first exclamation, without seeming to near it, he said, in a voice of affectionate solicitude—"Oh, Clanalvon! why did you leave that giddy boy to me—you who have so much more influence over him?"

In an instant the prompt feelings of Clanalvon turned on himself, as the only person to blame. He had deserted his young and indiscreet friend, and he alone was answerable for the consequences.—"Howard," said he, solemnly, "your father, your mother, abhor a gamester. To what do your losses amount? It was I who brought you here, and it is I who should bring you hence uninjured."

The loss was trivial, and soon settled; but Clanalvon knew that the ruling foible of Howard was an intense love of pleasure, in whatever form it presented itself; he saw that he had caught the spirit of the scene he had been engaged in, and would be easily tempted there again; and on the way to their appointment for the evening, he warned him against a passion for gaming with all the force of reason and persuasion, while Belville echoed all his sentiments, thus strengthening the hold he had already acquired over his intended victim, in blinding him to his character.

It was late when they entered the ball-room. Clanalvon looked round for Emily, and saw her going down the dance, languid, pale, and spiritless. Her eyes brightened as she perceived him; but the transient lustre faded away when she more nearly observed his dejected countenance as he approached her.

While watching her down the set, he heard the soft voice of Miss Hazlewood pronounce his name; and turning, he saw the dejection of his countenance reflected in the sudden change of hers.—"You are not well, lord Clanalvon," she exclaimed, in a tone of alarm.

He had recourse to the usual excuse on such occasions—a headache; her vinegarette was instantly in his hand; and she requested lord Belville, who was at her side, to go in search of lavender water to bathe his temples.

Touched by her kind solicitude, he endeavoured to rally his spirits to enter into conversation with her, until, seeing Emily's partner lead her to her aunt, he begged Cecilia to join her friend with him.

Emily welcomed him with a smile more affectionate than joyous.—"You are late," said she; "I hope nothing unpleasant has detained you?"

" I have a headache," he replied, pressing the hand she held out to him; " but I shall recover myself now," and he seated himself between her and Cecilia.

Emily saw evidently that something more than a headache was amiss with him. She longed to know the truth; but, fearful of distressing him by inquiry, tried rather to divert his thoughts from it.

Sensible, by her expressive looks rather than by her words, that she felt and shared his uneasiness, and soothed by the soft assiduities of Cecilia, he soon recovered his cheerfulness, and the time passed pleasantly until the party broke up. But, alone in his chamber, the events of the evening returned with oppressive weight on his mind; he had led, within the precincts which he himself had found so dangerous, a rash inexperienced boy—the lover, and as he had some reason to believe, the favoured lover of his sister—a youth, too, whose fond though rigid parents considered him as secure from every danger when in his society; he knew him to be warm-hearted, friendly, guileless, and innocent as childhood of every vice; but he also knew him to be unfixed in principle, ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, and, consequently, open to temptation; and to a disposition thus almost equally susceptible either of good or evil, he had perhaps given the first bent towards the latter; his eyes also now opened to the character of Belville. The good sense which he had endeavoured to lull asleep while only himself was concerned, roused when the principles of his friend and the happiness of his sister became endangered. He reviewed the past, and with bitter regret for his neglect of the counsels of Montague and other friends, was convinced that Belville and his mother had practised on his feelings by the deepest art, and that his reformation was only feigned, to lure him into his society, from which he determined to withdraw, and, if possible, to withdraw Howard also.

A note from sir James Gray, informing him that he had arrived the night before, and promising to be ready to see him in two hours, agreeably surprised Clanalvon the following morning. What a new turn did this give to his feelings! every cloud of sorrow or anxiety fled before the hope that the time was now come in which he could fix the day of his marriage with Emily. He hastened to her, and almost breathless from joyous emotion, announced to her the arrival of sir James, earnestly pressing her to name the day for their union, that he might make arrangements with him accordingly.

"Gently, dear Clanalvon," said Mrs. Nugent; "when you have settled with sir James, we shall know better how to proceed."

Clanalvon was grieved, but could offer no reasonable objection; and with a beating heart he went to the house of his guardian.

Sir James received him with warm affection, and after friendly inquiries for his mother and sisters—"Well, my dear Clanalvon," said he, "so now you are a man, and as great a goose as ever, I will engage. Sit down, child, and tell me all your plans."

"My first plan is what I believe you guessed before you left the country," replied Clanalvon.

"Yes, to marry Miss Nugent; so that is the cause of the business-face you have got on you this morning—you used not to be in such a hurry about business," said sir James; "well, so much the better—Emily Nugent is an excellent girl; it is well to get one sensible person among you, though I believe Elizabeth has a little brains; as for the rest of you, it is all sentiment, and generosity, and liberality; so that I expect to hear you are over head and ears in debt already."

Blushing and hesitating, Clanalvon acknowledged that he had involved himself a little farther than he ought.

"How, child?" exclaimed sir James, startled at finding some truth in his own jesting sarcasm; "sure you have not contrived to get in debt already? Did you not receive a half-year's rent in November, that is, upwards of seven thousand pounds?"

"But some of the tenants could not pay," Clanalvon answered; "besides the deduction of my mother's jointure."

"But there is not a tenant on your land that is not well able to pay his rent, and support his family in comfort afterwards."

Clanalvon, half-laughing, half-abashed, assured him that he had not remitted the rent to any but a few who had large families, and appeared unable to pay it without ruin.

"Remitted the rent, child! Do you mean that you have forgiven it to them entirely? Did you give your receipt to men that did not pay you?" inquired sir James.

"Only in a few instances," said Clanalvon, "where I felt it dreadful that I should wring from them a trifling sum, ruinous to them, and unimportant to me."

"Ay!" exclaimed sir James; "and your mother was of the same opinion;

that woman thinks that if money be but spent sentimentally, and elegantly too (she wont forget that), the very stones may be coined into gold to supply its place. Well, well, all I can say is, that your tenants are a great parcel of fools, that they did not all tell the same story."

He then entered seriously on the important duties a man of large fortune owed his country, the power of fulfilling which ought not to be trifled away in compliance with every start of transient good-nature, kindly adding—"Come, cheer up, my boy! though you are such a good-natured goose now, I know you have sense enough to appreciate your situation, and to do it honour in future." He then produced the accounts.

Of all sir James had to inform him, Clanalvon had long been perfectly aware, but he had reflected on it so little, and so little made it a guide to his actions, that it came on his spirits with all the shock of painful unforeseen intelligence. The savings of the minority were, as his guardian had often told him, and as lady Elizabeth had often reminded him, considerably short of the amount of his father's debts; that deficiency, augmented by the failure of a person who owed the property upwards of ten thousand pounds, and by the promise of Clanalvon to pay some of the creditors interest as well as principal, which had not been taken into sir James's calculation, now amounted to something above twenty-two thousand pounds, including the fortunes of his sisters as part of the debt; according to their father's will, interest on these was to commence from the time their brother came of age. The grandfather of the present earl, on account of the extravagance of his eldest son, had entailed the estate first on Clanalvon, and afterwards on his own second son, so strictly, that it was impossible to raise money by mortgage on it.

Sir James observed, that as he had for some time past been aware of pretty nearly the amount of the deficiency, he had considered of a remedy for it. The fortune of lady Elizabeth, he said, must be held sacred, as he hoped she would soon give it to that worthy fellow Montague; but little Olivia was too young to be in a hurry for hers, and therefore all his father's other debts might have been discharged at once, and Olivia's money replaced by instalments of five thousand a-year, which, with his mother's jointure, and the interest of both sister's fortunes, would confine him for a few years to between five and six thousand pounds per annum.—"But," continued he, "your own debts have deranged all this. My idea of the right and honourable would be, that you should pay the debts you have yourself contracted, and for which the people may be distressed, and settle for your father's afterwards; but I know your mother prefers the superhonourable to the honourable, and will have your father's debts paid first, and the creditors assembled for the purpose, and a speech made on the occasion, and all that, of which I am sure she has pictured the scene to her own mind a hundred times. Well, well, we will not disappoint her of her show-day, if we can help it—perhaps Charles may not want the whole of Elizabeth's money at first?"

"No," exclaimed Clanalvon, "I will never touch hers. I know their intention is to purchase land and settle on their own property—their happiness shall not be marred for my folly."

"Well, we shall see about it," said sir James. "Do you bring me, as soon as you can make it out, an accurate statement of your debts, and we will settle every thing the best we can for you all. And now," added the worthy man, "brighten up your countenance a little. Your mother is, you say, going to have an assembly to-night—do not break her foolish heart with your doleful looks, when she intends to be so graceful and happy tonight. I suppose it will add a few hundreds to the account, but no matter—let the woman have her ball in peace—it is long till she will have another; for if she cannot be at the top of splendour, she will get out of the way altogether; so say nothing about business until to-morrow, and tell her I will go see her performance this evening."

When Clanalvon returned home, he found all there was gaiety and splendour. It was the first ball poor lady Clanalvon had given in Dublin since her husband's death, and she looked so proud, so happy, so elated, that tears filled her son's eyes, as he thought how soon the triumph was to end, for well he knew the truth of sir James's observation on the subject; and bitterly he reproached himself for the profusion which had made her favourite child the means of bringing on her the mortification which he knew she would severely feel, overlooking at the moment that she had had any share in that profusion.

Hastily quitting the busy scene of preparation, he retired to his study, to look over the memorandums of the several engagements he had entered into. The amount, when put together, shocked and amazed him. Each separate sum he remembered, but he had never before combined the whole in his mind; he also remembered that the accounts of his upholsterer, coachmaker, and many other tradespeople, were not yet sent in.

He remained, pacing the apartment with agitated steps, sometimes reviewing the account, in hopes of detecting some error in the calculation—sometimes adding to it articles which had at first escaped his memory—and sometimes wondering at the past infatuation, which now rendered new to his feelings what he had always known, until the joyous voice of Olivia called to him—" Come, Clanalvon, come," she cried; " you must leave your books for to-day—you do not know how late it is. We are going to dinner, and you have not yet seen the rooms—come out, come out," she added, " or let me in."

Clanalvon opened his door—the smiling countenance of his sister struck a pang to his heart.—" Now," said Olivia, " since you were not with us the whole time, do not go through the house until it is lighted; you will be delighted with the beauty of the decorations."

Clanalvon resolved not to throw over her playful smiles a cloud of anxiety for him, and struggled to assume a cheerfulness he did not feel. They ran together to the dining-room—pleasure beamed from every eye there—all were too much engaged in the business of the evening to perceive the dejection he could not wholly conquer, except Elizabeth, who having foreseen it, as the natural consequence of his interview with sir James, could not be deceived, and tried, by increased tenderness of manner, to soothe his feelings, and by observations on the necessity which his rank and fortune laid them under, of giving at least one magnificent entertainment during the winter, endeavoured to erase this day's extravagance from his list of self-reproaches.

The scene of pleasure, of festivity, of expence, that followed, was viewed by Clanalvon alone with pain. Not a cloud sat on any brow, to darken the brilliancy of the evening; every one was pleased—every one was happy. His mother was peculiarly calculated to charm, and all the captivating graces of her manner and conversation were now called forth. Clanalvon beheld her happy and brilliant in the sphere for which she seemed peculiarly formed, and lamented the necessity that was to throw her back into the comparative obscurity in which she had hitherto lived since her widowhood. No feelings of regret for Emily mingled with his reflections; he knew her to be equally capable of adorning splendour or retirement; nor could all his partial fondness for his mother prevent his being sensible that in the hands of Emily his consequence would be supported as respectably, with much less of the expensive show that she delighted in.

Elizabeth, too, aware that their present extravagant style of living must, for a while, be suspended, viewed her mother with a degree of tenderness, which for the time annihilated the sentiments of disapprobation with which she had latterly regarded the excessive vanity that was perpetually defeating its own ends, by destroying the means of its gratification.

Clanalvon danced the two first sets with partners rather of etiquette than of choice, and still finding that Emily was not arrived, he went to Miss Hazlewood; she was sitting by her chaperon, silent and thoughtful—lord Belville, as usual, at her side, and in evident impatience at her inattention to him.

" Miss Hazlewood," said Clanalvon.

She did not hear, and he repeated the name, taking her hand. She started, her colour brightened, and her countenance became suddenly animated.—" You have not been dancing?" he said.

" No," replied Cecilia; " I hate dancing in a crowd, and no partner offered who could reconcile me to it."

Something in the look and manner, rather than the words, indicated to Clanalvon that he would not have been rejected on the same account. In fact, she had often danced with him in greater crowds than the present. To ask her to dance after she had refused others, for a reason which still existed in equal force, would, he felt, be an impertinent assumption of an intended compliment to himself; and to quit her in search of another partner, he felt would be a gross rudeness towards her, and he accordingly provided himself with a seat next her.

This movement was not unmarked. Mrs. Mansfield, surrounded by her coterie, had impatiently watched for his coming to engage one of her daughters, and used as much skill and manœuvre to avoid partners as she sometimes did to obtain them. With feelings of rage and disappointment, she now saw him engage himself to another—not merely for the dance, but, what she thought infinitely more alarming, for the purpose of enjoying her conversation.

"I am not yet sure which, the beautiful Miss Nugent, or the wealthy Miss

Hazlewood, will carry off the young earl," said an old lady of her coterie, who read her feelings in her countenance, and, on account of some late losses at cards to her, took a malignant pleasure in irritating them; "were I to judge from his manner, I should think he liked the beauty best; but the fair heiress seems to receive no small pleasure from his attentions."

"Really," said another lady, who happening at the moment to have no particular reason for any particular opinion on the subject, spoke as she thought, "I do not know what to think. I never saw a man appear more devotedly attached than he does to Miss Nugent; but when she is not present, I could almost say the same of Miss Hazlewood."

"It appears then," observed another, "that his passion for one lady is love, and for the other a very sentimental friendship."

"Mrs. Mansfield," said the first lady who had spoken, "you knew his lordship in the country—which do you think will be countess of Clanalvon?"

"The lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown,
Up springs the little dog, and knocks them both down,"

replied Mrs. Mansfield, laughing significantly.

"He certainly is a great admirer of Miss Jane Mansfield," said a lady, who was admitted to all Mrs. Mansfield's supper-parties, for thinking every man of their acquaintance in love with her daughters; for every prudent mother knows that next to the reality of a lover, the reputation of one is of the first importance to a young lady.

"He certainly often notices her," said Mrs. Mansfield; "but we all know Jenny is so plain, she cannot attract attention as much as Maria. No—Maria often offends him, she is so sprightly, and such a gay little flirt, and then he is off to another—Jane oftener than any one else; but I have seen him look so distressed—poor fellow!"

"But I really think," said the first lady, smiling, "that lord Clanalvon admires your second daughter quite as much as Miss Mansfield."

"I sometimes have suspected," said the elated mother, "that Jane was the object. There are few girls more accomplished than Jane, but that is rather in Charles Montague's taste; they talk by the hour together of botany, and geography, and things quite above me, I assure you."

She paused to give this hint time to make a due impression on her auditors, and resumed—"But as to his lordship and Emily Nugent, you may take it from me, who am in such close intimacy with *them* all, there is nothing in it whatever; they have been friends and playfellows from their childhood—nothing more. Lady Clanalvon did, I believe, at one time take some sentimental nonsense about it into her head, which caused a report. You know her dear ladyship has such fine feelings!"

"Hush!" said one of her party; "Mrs. Nugent is close behind you."

Mrs. Nugent had heard the conversation; and though pained and annoyed by the remarks made on his attentions to Cecilia, every feeling of jealousy on behalf of her niece vanished, as she saw him, instantly on catching a glance of her, spring from his seat, and hastily advance towards her.

"Where is Emily?" he anxiously asked, taking her hand.

"She had a cold, so I thought it best not to bring her out."

"A cold! not a bad one?—is she gone to bed?—have you sent for a physician?—is she feverish?—has she taken any thing?" inquired Clanalvon.

"I may answer 'no' to all your questions; you know you remarked that she had a slight cold this morning," said Mrs. Nugent.

"Then it is nothing serious?"

"You would not see me here, dear boy, if it were," replied Mrs. Nugent, smiling.

"I will call early to-morrow, to inquire about her," said Clanalvon; "and you will see me—I want to speak to you, to renew the subject you put me off of this morning."

Mrs. Nugent consented; and after a few minutes conversation, he remarked that at sight of her he had started away so abruptly from Miss Hazlewood, that politeness required him to return, begging of her to accompany him.

With this Mrs. Nugent readily complied, feeling that it would be useful in silencing the observations which she found were whispered about, and which she wished to stop, rather from a fear of their being injurious to Cecilia, than from any other cause; and remained with her as long as she judged sufficient to answer her benevolent purpose, leaving her only when she feared that her attaching herself too closely to her might seem like watch-over her conversation with Clanalvon.

He remained unavoidably fixed to the side of Cecilia; for when he had at one time risen to speak to a gentleman passing near, she had checked him, by whispering —"Do not let lord Belville get your chair —he persecutes me so."

This was no manœuvre on her part to detain him, but simply the effect of the habit she indulged herself in, of yielding to every feeling as it arose, without weighing either consequences or appearances. She liked the conversation of lord Clanalvon, and disliked that of lord Belville.

The vanity of lady Clanalvon was highly gratified in seeing the elegant and captivating lord Belville hovering near, vainly watching to catch one of those smiles which were lavished in bright profusion on her son; and every time she passed them by, she stopped, with some expressions of caressing endearment for Cecilia.

The manners of both struck Clanalvon, for the first time, with an apprehension that his attentions to Miss Hazlewood were liable to a misconstruction, which every sentiment of honour and of delicacy called on him to prevent, and for this purpose he took the first opportunity of one of his sisters being near him, to say to her, loud enough for Cecilia to hear—" I am quite miserable about Emily, but I hope foolishly so, for Mrs. Nugent would not have left her, if any thing that could be of consequence was amiss."

He added some words, expressive of his hope that she was only detained at home by delicacy, on account of the arrangements now pending respecting her marriage; but the very consciousness of the intention with which they were uttered, rendered him unable to pronounce them distinctly enough to reach the ear of Cecilia. If they had reached her, they would probably have produced no change on her countenance. Alive only to the present moment, and to one feeling at a time, she loved lord Clanalvon with all the fervent enthusiasm with which she might love the hero of a romance or a poem, and with as little reference of that sentiment to herself, or her own views in life. The idea of supplanting her friend in his heart never entered her mind, either as an object to pursue, or to guard against—she delighted in his conversation and attentions, sought them with avidity, and thought no farther.

Mrs. Hastings, who was a worthy, sensible woman, might have opened her eyes to the danger she was incurring, either of involving herself in a hopeless attachment, or in the guilt of treachery towards her friend, but that she held the opinions of that lady in too much contempt to listen to them. In her childhood she had ardently loved her, and with pleasure found herself consigned by her father's will to her care; but about a year before the present period, a difference of opinion respecting a novel, with which Cecilia was enchanted, and of which Mrs. Hastings endeavoured to point out the gracefully-veiled immoral tendency, convinced the young enthusiast that her monitress, though a good kind of woman, was utterly devoid of taste, sentiment, and refinement, and incapable of entering into or comprehending her feelings. Emily and Mrs. Nugent, whose advice might have been useful to her on any other occasion, were precluded from the possibility of offering it on this, as they well knew she would only resent it with indignation, as the effect of an unjust and insulting jealousy.

Clanalvon passed an uneasy and restless night. The exhilaration of his mother during the splendid festivity which she so eminently graced, impressed on his mind a painful conviction of the bitterness of regret with which she would submit to the plan of economy necessary to the recovery of a free command over his ample fortune; yet to retrieve that power which, under judicious management, might be so extensively useful, principle, and the enlarged benevolence which governed his mind when not under the influence of some immediate impression, taught him to consider an imperative duty.

At other times, Miss Hazlewood equally disturbed his thoughts. Of the whispers in circulation on the subject of her open preference of him, he was not ignorant. Was he right in continuing the attentions which gave rise to them? Was there not a danger also, that, under the guise of frank and mutual friendship, her heart might be ensnared into a more exclusive attachment? Yet, on the other hand, her ardent affection for Emily proved that no such danger existed; and in respect to the comments of others, did not the pain impressed on her ever-varying countenance, on the slightest instance of neglect from any of the few she distinguished by her regard, expose her to them in a more humiliating manner than his attentions could do? That her greatest source of enjoyment was in his conversation, was not to be doubted; and was he, for a dubious remedy, to a perhaps imaginary evil, to deprive so dejected, so unhappy, and so amiable a being, of one of the few enjoyments of which the peculiar construction of her mind rendered her susceptible?

For his uneasiness about Howard his

mind found no palliative. Through all the hurry of the preceding day, he had found a few minutes time to call on him, for the purpose of renewing his cautions on the subject of gaming, but found he was from home, and, as he learned from his servant, in company with lord Belville.

In the evening, it was later than his usual hour of attendance at their house, when he entered the ball-room with the same dangerous companion, looking heated and discomposed, and Clanalvon, with an aching heart, had observed his assiduities towards his sister Olivia—assiduities which he himself had once encouraged, in partial admiration of his frank and generous nature, as likely to promote her happiness, but which he now regarded with apprehension, as of a contrary tendency. To himself he imputed this change, overlooking, in the bitterness of self-accusation, that principles so easily shaken could not, under any circumstances, have formed a foundation for any rational dependence.

But through his troubled thoughts the image of Emily appeared, like a vision of peace and happiness. With all the fascinations of his mother, she had not the same love of displaying them. The family circle and the crowded assembly saw her equally animated and equally composed. In her his heart could repose all its feelings, without fear of harsh reproof or blind indulgence. She could see, and could aid him against the weaknesses of his character, while she would shield him from humiliation or self-reproach, by pointing out the virtues connected with them. Once united to her, his course through life would be honourable, useful, happy; and no weak vanity in her would retard that union, until it could take place with all the splendour due to his rank and fortune; and with soothing reveries of a life passed with her in domestic blessedness and public utility, he tranquillized his spirits for a few hours rest.

Before the family were assembled next morning, Clanalvon went to Emily, to give her an account of all that had passed, telling her, with a smile, that he hoped she would not value him the less, for finding that she was to commence life with him less brilliantly than he had taught her to expect.

From her he returned to converse with his mother and sisters on the state of his affairs. He dreaded lest his mother, in the bitterness of her first vexation at the proposed restriction in their expenditure, should reproach him with an extravagance to which the habits she had encouraged in him of indiscriminate unreflecting good-nature had so largely contributed; and this he felt he could hardly bear, in the manner in which he wished to bear every thing from her. But his fears were groundless—all her anger turned on sir James Gray. After he had explained to her all the particulars—"But, my dear," she exclaimed, "I cannot understand by what strange management sir James has reduced your large fortune to five thousand pounds a-year."

In vain Clanalvon repeated and varied the manner of his explanation; she obstinately persisted in not understanding.—"What is the use," she said, "of your having fifteen thousand pounds a-year, if you are to spend but five? and if all this be true, why were we never told it before?"

"Dear mamma," exclaimed her son, "we always knew that my father's debts exceeded the savings of the minority; we also knew of Mr. D——'s failure the moment it occurred; it was our own folly," he checked himself, and changed the expression—"my own folly that prevented our acting on it."

"And can," replied lady Clanalvon, "the folly, as you term it, of a few months, destroy a fortune such as yours? Depend upon it, my love, there is something at the bottom of it which you do not understand. I will go myself, and speak to sir James."

In vain her three children joined in endeavouring to dissuade her from a step, which, from the temper she was then in, they saw could only tend to unpleasant altercation, and, perhaps, wound the feelings of their worthy and zealous friend. She ordered her carriage, and would not admit of a word being spoken on the subject, until they reached the house of sir James.

The conversation took the expected turn. She assailed him with smooth words and bitter insinuations—"That there was something extraordinary"—"How could it be?" &c. &c.

He answered her with calculations and accounts, of which she declared she was not competent to judge, and still returned to the charge—"That it was very extraordinary."

"We will wonder at it as much as you like presently," said sir James, at length; "but first let us settle the business as it stands."

He then asked Clanalvon for the memorandum of his personal debts. The good man started, with friendly emotion, at the vast amount, near sixteen thousand pounds, while, with burning blushes, Clanalvon informed him that the principal of his tradespeople's bills were not yet come in.

Sir James paused in thoughtful silence for some minutes, and then explained to lady Clanalvon and her daughters the plan he had arranged for the immediate payment of the late earl's debts; but for those now added he was unprepared, and must take some time to consider of a remedy for them.

"It needs no deliberation," said Elizabeth; "I do not consider myself a single woman—I do not feel that I have any more right in my property than I would have as the wife of Charles Montague. In his name then, rather than my own, I desire that my twenty thousand pounds may be employed, like Olivia's, for the present emergency, and, like hers, be gradually repaid."

"Impossible, Lizzy!" exclaimed her brother, while tears, which no sorrow could have drawn from him, rushed from his eyes; "it would overturn all your plans, and Charles's."

"If it did," said Elizabeth, affectionately, "we should be richly repaid, in shielding your honour from a cloud on your first entrance into life; but it will not injure us—perhaps we can arrange to pay the purchase-money gradually."

"Or perhaps," said Clanalvon, tears again rushing to his eyes, "to risk losing the beautiful spot you had taken such a fancy to, and hereafter purchase one less to your taste."

No persuasions and entreaties of lady Elizabeth could have prevailed on her brother to accede to this arrangement, had not his mother interposed, and insisted on it, saying it would break her heart to see him exposed to the disgrace of being unable to pay his debts of honour, or his tradespeople's bills, before he left town.—"And now," said she, when it was settled, "how much is this to add t time in which my poor boy is to be on the wretched pittance of five thou a-year?"

In vain her children reasoned, an James rallied—they could not re from her imagination the impressior the family were reduced to the mo plorable circumstances; and she talk the most rigid economy, in order to en this miserable period of their exist

Lady Elizabeth, whose clear u standing perceived that this line of duct and temper would render the nuance of necessary economy impr able, after long and vain endeavou soften the exaggeration of her mo feelings, proposed the total relinq ment of the interest of her fortune Olivia's, until their brother's estate again unencumbered.

Olivia joyfully seconded her pro while the mother, who had worked self into hysterical sobbing, emb them with grateful transport, acce their offer, as there was no sacrifice, she said, too great to make for their brother "in this dreadful emergency."

Clanalvon, though secretly determined not to be guilty of such injustice towards his generous sisters, felt that this was not the moment for expostulation; and Elizabeth, dreading fresh irritation should he mention his marriage, hurried her mother away.

Clanalvon, after placing them in the carriage, went directly to Emily Nugent. There, after giving vent to the feelings of his full heart, in ardent praises of the noble conduct of his sisters, he proposed their marriage, without preparation or parade, as soon as arrangements could be made for their leaving town immediately after. The settlements he mentioned to Mrs. Nugent, were to the full extent of what the will of his grandfather empowered him to make; and Emily was just assuring him that she was so little fond of show and bustle, that, if it did not give him uneasiness, she was rather pleased that they should have to pass a few years in greater retirement and tranquillity, than would be, perhaps, perfectly justifiable, were he in full possession of his income, when lady Clanalvon entered alone.

With much emotion she spoke of the "dreadful business," of which she supposed Clanalvon had informed them; bitterly lamenting the miserable change in their circumstances, lately so rich, so happy, so prosperous, and now reduced in a moment, she hardly knew how, to what, for the family of a nobleman, was scarcely above want.

"Dearest lady Clanalvon," said Emily, with caressing tenderness, laying her hand on hers, "do not see it in so gloomy a light—five thousand a-year can furnish every comfort, every elegance. Splendour has had its turn, and will come again—meantime we can——"

"We can!" repeated lady Clanalvon, starting, and colouring deeply—"My sweet Emily——" she paused, and hesitated.

"We can, my Emily," said Clanalvon, eagerly, "live happily without it."

"But," resumed his mother, recovering the courage which had failed her, "you cannot surely expect me to consent to your marriage, until you can marry as an earl of Clanalvon ought."

The blush of mingled shame and indignation rose even to the fair forehead of Emily.

"She is entitled, by my promises," he said, "to an earl of Clanalvon, with fifteen thousand a-year, but will not refuse him because he is for a short time limited to a smaller income."

"She has too much regard for you," said the mother, "to wish you to marry, while you must bring your wife into obscurity."

"She has too much self-respect," said Mrs. Nugent, calmly, but colouring, "to enter a family where she is not welcomed by all."

"Emily is above such frivolous considerations," exclaimed Clanalvon, seizing her hand; "she will not break her faith with me for a form of etiquette."

Emily had by this time recovered her self-possession; the mantling blood had retreated to her heart, and left her face as pale as marble. With a tremulous voice, that struggled for firmness, she said—"It would indeed be frivolous in me, if any motive of irritation or wounded feeling should induce me to deny the strong, the fixed affection which unites my heart, my fate, with yours. I am yours with consent of parents on both sides, but I think, in duty to your mother, the time of our union should yield to her wishes."

"Oh, Emily!" cried Clanalvon, reproachfully.

"I feel I am right," said she; "and believe me, it is not want of affection makes me yield to what I feel a duty in both."

"You are right, my child," said Mrs. Nugent.

"You are more than right, my sweet, my lovely Emily," exclaimed lady Clanalvon, ardently embracing her.

"She is wrong," said Clanalvon, vehemently; "the generosity of her heart has beguiled her exalted understanding, or she could not have stooped to sacrifice my happiness, my real interest, to the indulgence of an absurd and frivolous vanity, which she is incapable of partaking."

The first reproachful or disrespectful words she had ever heard from the lips of her son, threw lady Clanalvon into violent hysterics, from which no efforts could recover her, until the mild persuasions of Emily, and her repeated assurances that nothing could ever shake her fixed and firm affection for him, had won on him to make the promise she required, that he would not marry until his affairs were in a more prosperous state.

As they were going, Clanalvon said to Emily, impressively—"Emily, you have now, as far as in you lies, deprived my unstable character of that influence which should have confirmed it in all you wish; yet remember, whether you exert that influence over me or not, I shall consider every error of my conduct as a violation of my love to you."

"And for what," thought Emily, when she had retired to her own room, unable to speak on the subject, even to her aunt, "for what is Clanalvon's heart thus wrung, and his principles withdrawn from the influence so dear to him? Merely for the love of vain show and empty parade. His mother has pictured to her imagination his bride loaded with jewels, splendid equipages, magnificent entertainments; and for these miserable follies she has risked—alas! she knows not what she may have risked!" and she melted into tears, as her mind ran over the peculiarities of his character. She justly believed herself dearer to him than all else that the world contained; but of the weak ungenerous generosity which led him to sacrifice himself to the impulse of the moment, and in himself all those whose interests were bound up in his, she now felt the danger and the wrong; yet she did not love him the less. He mingled in every feeling of her breast; the earthly part of her soul was devoted to him; and in her supplications before the throne of mercy, she prayed for him as fervently as for herself—for him, more steadiness—for herself, for less devotion to him. Her thoughts sometimes startled that she loved him more than she ought to love any earthly object. His very faults excited a solicitude, that only tended to rivet her thoughts and feelings more closely to him; and now something like an apprehension connected with his mother's unbounded influence, Miss Hazlewood's immense fortune, attractive manners, and undisguised attachment for him, obtruded on her mind. She did not suffer herself actually to fear her as a rival; that, she felt, would be to wrong Clanalvon; yet something of doubt and anxiety took place of the happy tranquillity of secure, unclouded love.

Lady Clanalvon was so exhausted, that

when she returned home she threw herself on the sofa, where, after a few hours repose had composed her nerves, she was visited by some compunctious feelings, as she recollected the vehement anguish of her son, and the deep though calm sorrow that spoke on the pale face of Emily; but visions of that beautiful Emily adorning the splendour by which she was surrounded, and of her own exulting feelings, when congratulated on her lovely daughter-in-law, by the crowds of rank and fashion, and the numerous throng of tenants and dependants, for whom her fancy had prepared an entertainment, equally distinguished by magnificence and taste, put those feelings to flight, and brought her to the conclusion, that the delay she proposed was a cheap sacrifice to advantages, which, by adding to the consequence of her son, must add to his happiness. She could not, however, bear to feel that this idolized child was now irritated against her. She sent for him, and by arguments, persuasions, and maternal endearments, endeavoured to win him over to her opinion.

He long adhered firmly to the declaration, that he had only complied in duty to her, enforced by the representations of Emily, but that he considered the sacrifice as needless as it was severe; but at length her tears and caresses prevailed on him to relax the coldness of manner which resentment had given him, to soothe her in turn with reciprocal caresses, and to promise that he would not make her unhappy, by appearing dissatisfied with a sacrifice made in compliance with her anxious care for his credit and advantage.

For several days, however, his spirits continued so depressed that he was unable to mingle in society, and could find neither intereſt or enjoyment in any thing but his long and daily visits to Emily, and in consultations with his guardian on the state of his affairs.

From the borrowed fortunes of his sisters his father's debts were immediately discharged, though not with the eclat his mother had fondly imagined; his spirits were unequal to exertion, and he simply enclosed to each creditor the sum due: his own debts of honour, and a few shop debts, consumed the remainder of the forty thousand pounds; but as many of the latter yet remained, for which the people to whom they were due were distressed, sir James offered, on his own account, to raise five thousand pounds, as he felt Clanalvon's borrowing so early on his entrance on life disadvantageous to him. When he put the sum into the hands of his young friend, he desired him to dispose of it immediately, for he was sure, if he kept it an hour in the house, it would "ooze out of the palms of his hands," like Acres's valour.—"Now go, my boy," he added, "and in two days you will be here again. You were forced to give it to some rascal with a pitiful face, and are in despair about your just debts:" but as the day was far advanced, giving way to the lassitude natural to low spirits, and feeling it impossible that he could again be deceived into spending on others what was so necessary to himself, he thought it needless that day to settle his various accounts, and on leaving his guardian returned home to dinner.

He was there told that a gentleman waited for him, who wanted to speak to him on business, and on entering his study, found captain Sutton, who hoped that the importance of the subject which had brought him would plead his excuse for the intrusion; and then proceeded to inform him that he had, the evening before, by accident discovered, that Howard had already been led by lord Belville into a ruinous course of dissipation, from which, if any thing could withdraw him, Mr. Sutton felt that it was the counsel of lord Clanalvon, and therefore felt it his duty to inform his lordship of the circumstances.

Starting at the dreadful intelligence, Clanalvon scarcely heard the latter part of what Mr. Sutton said, but resolved immediately to fly to his unfortunate friend. Notwithstanding the agitation of his mind since the conversation of his mother with sir James, he had repeatedly endeavoured to see Howard, and had sometimes seen him for a few minutes; but it was evident that he wished to avoid the Clanalvon family, and felt pain and confusion in their presence. He was now not at home, nor did his servants know where he was gone; but, ever indefatigable in the cause of benevolence or friendship, Clanalvon sought him from place to place, and at length discovered that he was gone with lord Belville to attend a tavern-dinner: thither he followed him, and without giving his name, sent up a message, requesting to speak with him.

The servant returned with the answer that Mr. Howard could not come down; but if the gentleman wished to join a merry party, they would be glad of his company.

" Say that lord Clanalvon will not detain him longer than he desires," said Clanalvon, and in a moment Howard appeared in a state of intoxication.

At sight of so young a creature in such a situation, Clanalvon started back, and his too-sensitive feelings struck him with the pang of self-reproach, as the cause of all the errors of his friend. Entreating him to be calm, he led him away, but he was not now in a state to be reasoned with on his conduct. He could only repeat the question—"Does Olivia know all?"

Clanalvon feared, by bringing him home, to incur for him the violent and injurious indignation of his parents; so, having immediately gained his consent to leave the tavern party, he accompanied him to an hotel, where, after effectually using every means for restoring him to his senses, he reasoned with him on the fatal course he saw him pursuing, acknowledged the share he had had in leading him into it (exaggerated as it was by his desire to lessen his friend's guilt), and drew from him a full confession of the extent to which he had been led astray.

The only part in which Clanalvon saw that his exertions could be of use, was the very large debts contracted by Howard, which he felt must ever be a burden to prevent his rising into the paths of virtue. He had not one moment's hesitation in determining to discharge them at his own expence, but his troubled spirits not a little felt the new involvement which must still farther defer his marriage, and delay the arrangement of his affairs so necessary to the happiness of his family.

At first the more immediately-selfish considerations did not occur to him; but susceptible as he was of censure, it was a deep personal sacrifice to incur sir James's blame of his general conduct, though, in this instance, expenditure was necessary; and also to appear encroaching on the kindness of that generous friend, by again demanding of him the sum necessary for the payment of his own debts, or incurring the injury to himself which sir James had done so much to prevent. But all were secondary considerations, compared with the agonized anxiety he felt for Howard's unsteady principles, both as a friend he loved, and as the lover of Olivia; and with the dreadful self-reproach which tore his breast, for having been first to set the example which the unfortunate young man was so ready to follow.

Giving him every consolation in his power, except the promise he anxiously demanded of being on his former footing in the family, and engaging to meet him the following morning, Clanalvon left him at home for the night.

With what fraternal pride and fondness did his bosom swell, when, on relating the circumstances to Elizabeth, she eagerly exclaimed—" Oh, dearest Clanalvon! here is an object which indeed demands your assistance! You may save him now by releasing him from debt, in which, if he continue, he will again fall into the power of lord Belville; and even though it were money, and in *your name* literally, for you cannot give security for twopence."

Clanalvon himself informed his Emily of the circumstances which had again forced him to break through the economical care necessary to the re-establishment of his affairs; but her generous pleasure at what he had done for Howard—the same disinterested pleasure which he had admired in his sister under the same circumstances, he thought, proved in her a want of the ardent attachment which had given him such exquisite agony in making the sacrifice.

While he was with Emily, Cecilia Hazlewood entered. Her visit was short; but the tender fondness of her manner to Emily during it interested Clanalvon more than ever for her.

"It is long," said she, as he attended her to her carriage—"it is long, my lord, since I have had the pleasure of seeing you. I am not going to reproach you, *but* I have so few pleasures. Emily too money, and in *your name* literally, for you cannot give security for twopence."

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Clanalvon earnestly assured her that business only could have prevented his oftener waiting on her.

"Perhaps," she continued, "you will be disengaged to-morrow morning? how delighted I should be to see you and lady Olivia! You know how much I enjoy your conversation."

Had his doubts on the night of the ball ever returned on his mind, these words would have dispelled them. He promised a visit next day; but as Olivia had a cold, and could not accompany him, he went alone. She was going to a public concert in the evening with Mrs. Hastings, and assuring Clanalvon it would be useful to his evidently-depressed spirits, engaged him to attend her there.

Pleasure, where Emily was not, he could not know, but he felt gratified in seeing Cecilia all life and animation, and in hearing her say that her enjoyment in music was doubled by the society of a person who had taste to admire the beauties, and feel the defects, as she did. From her avowed pleasure in his conversation, he felt very constant visits necessary, and soon they became as regular as those to Emily. His own conscience told him that the interest she had in his heart never drew one thought from love and Emily; and he felt Elizabeth's warnings, that his attentions might not be received, as he said they were given, a needless, groundless fear—cruel towards the dejected Cecilia, though founded on anxious affection for himself and Emily.

A message from sir James in a few days called Clanalvon to make arrangements at his house with the person who was to lend him the money. As he was hastening there, he saw at some distance Mr. Sutton, and, anxious to thank him for his friendly conduct towards Robert Howard, he followed and joined him; but his expressions of obligation seemed scarcely heard—the usually-cheerful young man seemed absorbed in the deepest affliction.

—"Lord Clanalvon," said he, at length, "my knowledge of your character almost induces me to relate to you what should never pass my lips to any other person; but sorrow such as mine seeks sympathy, though alleviation it cannot know. Had death deprived me of her in its common forms, I might have hoped, at some future period, to find again sweet peace of mind—I might have been resigned to my fate. My lord, may I seek your sympathy?"

Much touched, Clanalvon assured him that his confidence would not be ill-placed.

"I loved, lord Clanalvon—I idolized a creature more lovely, beautiful, than imagination can paint, and in return she pitied, nay loved, unworthy me. But though of high consequence, she was portionless, and I had nothing but my heart to offer her; another, possessed of rank and wealth, also adored her matchless charms; her father commanded her to marry him, and see me no more; she refused, and has been imprisoned in her own apartment. This day week her cruel father means to force her to the altar—but she will never go—poison will make her mine in death."

Clanalvon felt something in the style in which this story was told unlike real feeling, and he was silent.

"The beloved lover of Miss Nugent can feel for me," continued Sutton; "she—she only of all I have ever seen, resembled my poor Emily. Such was the dovelike softness of her eyes—such was—oh! conceive a creature young, lovely, fascinating, as Miss Nugent, driven by anguish of mind to suicide! conceive Miss Nugent torn from your arms, as Emily has been from mine, and pity me!"

"I do pity you," said Clanalvon, but his voicc did not bear its usual testimony to his words.

Sutton was too quick and wily not to perceive this; he had aimed at the pathetic, and lost the natural; and now, assuming the more easy tones of conversation, he entered on particulars, and by degrees interested all the feelings of Clanalvon—perhaps the repeated recurrence of the name of Emily somewhat contributed to this effect.

" And can she not be saved? is there no hope of working on the father's feelings?" he eagerly inquired.

" None," was the reply.

" None! how dreadful! Have you not formed any plan to rescue her? She must not perish!" exclaimed Clanalvon.

" She must," said Sutton, in a voice of well-acted despondence; " money alone can do it, and that I cannot command."

Clanalvon coloured, and his heart beat high, as he asked—" How much?"

" More than it is in the nature of things for me to obtain. I have tried every thing. My hope was to carry her to the Continent, and there remain with her, until her wealthy uncle, whose heiress and idol she is, and who could not live without her, should recall us; then the debt could be paid; but who will trust a friendless soldier, whose only security is his honour? Two thousand pounds would be absolutely necessary, and who would venture that for me?"

"I would," cried Clanalvon, ardently, "if so much was my own; but I cannot—all I now possess is the right of others."

"I know it," said Sutton; "it is no shock to me. I know that Emily must die—my poor, poor Emily! yet I am grateful for your sympathy." He pressed Clanalvon's hand, and went.

Never had inclination so strongly struggled against duty in the breast of Clanalvon as at this moment; but resolved that duty should be victorious, and fearful of delay, instantly on receiving the money from sir James's friend, he hastened to discharge the large accounts of his upholsterer, and several other tradespeople. Two thousand pounds now remained, exactly the sum due to his coachmaker, and to his house he went with it; but at every step fancy painted Sutton's Emily in the loved form of Emily Nugent, the agonized victim of parental cruelty, dying by her own hand, and he could save her; but justice claimed all he possessed. Afraid of himself, he quickened his rapid pace, and already had taken the bills from his pocketbook, when the door was opened. Mr. Murphy was not at home—so the dreaded delay was necessary; but he requested that he would call upon him as early as possible next day. Still the unhappy Emily was before him: her lover had failed in interesting him for himself, but the idea of her anguish and danger was insupportable. The fancied form seemed reproaching him as her murderer, since in him rested the power of saving her.

Such were his agitated feelings, when Sutton again met him.—"I have seen her servant," said he; "she still hopes that I may rescue her; but in case the fatal to-morrow should find her unassisted, the instrument of death is ready, and she must be left to suicide. Oh, lord Clanalvon——" While he yet spoke, the notes were in his hand, and, without waiting for thanks, Clanalvon was in a moment out of sight.

Another form now rose before him—it was that of Elizabeth. The command of her fortune was indeed necessary to her happiness, since that of her Charles depended on it; yet she had voluntarily yielded it for the benefit of her brother, and he had permitted his feelings to be worked on, to expend on another her right. Could not a smaller sum have answered every purpose? Subsistence alone could be necessary to them in their banishment, and one hundred pounds would have been amply sufficient for their journey to France. Yet how could Sutton demand more than was absolutely necessary, if such were really the situation of his Emily? This question Clanalvon could not answer to himself. Prepossessed, as he was, in favour of the sincerity and veracity of every one he conversed with, he had too much good sense to believe that such a sum was the smallest they could subsist on; and the idea of the story being false never entered his too-unsuspecting mind; but he did think that Sutton, unfeeling for the dreadful circumstances, had considered in the affair his own personal convenience, and obtained, under the shelter of this interesting demand, sufficient money to answer other purposes.

Clanalvon was engaged to dine with Mrs. Nugent, and only saw his sisters for a few minutes—so did not relate to Elizabeth the events of the morning. During dinner, Emily remarked his agitated countenance and depressed spirits; and while he saw her, by smiles and gaiety, endeavour to dispel the gloom, he could not bear to tell her that it was caused by self-reproach, well knowing that the consciousness of his suffering under such a feeling was one of the severest pangs her affectionate heart could know; but when he saw on her expressive countenance the serious anxiety she felt for his health, he told her that his own impetuosity of feeling had given cause for the depression.—"You know the state of my affairs," said he—"you know the circumstances of Charles and Elizabeth—you know how my heart longs for the re-establishment which my mother has made the condition of my happiness; conceive then, Emily, how deeply I must suffer, in having been myself the person, by my heedless and unnecessary extravagance, to delay this wished-for period."

Emily's cheek changed while he spoke, from the pale hue which anxiety had lately given it, to the deepest glow of emotion, and her eyes sought the ground, to conceal the tears which filled them. Without venturing a second glance towards her face, he proceeded with an exact statement of his first meeting with Sutton.—"My feelings," he said, "were indeed deeply and justly interested for this lovely sufferer; both in mind and person he described her as resembling you—her name too—I almost felt as if it was my Emily."

An almost-satirical expression stole over the mild features of Mrs. Nugent—"And were you really persuaded, my dear Clanalvon, to believe that a woman resembling Emily could attach herself to Mr. Sutton, or that any affliction could induce her to force herself, impatient, unresigned, into the presence of her Maker?"

Clanalvon's face was instantly overspread with the deepest crimson, as, in a low voice, he said—"Perhaps derangement caused her violence."

"Or, more probably," said Mrs. Nugent, "no such person exists."

Clanalvon started.

"I am very sure," she added, "that you will find great part of the story, if not the whole, a fabrication."

Many circumstances now returned to Clanalvon's mind, which he had not before observed. Mr. Sutton had said that she was portionless—again, that she was an heiress; first her marriage was to take place in a week, afterwards the next day; and besides, it was improbable that a girl of consequence, of such distinguished beauty, resembling the admired Emily Nugent, should have never been heard of.

Hesitatingly he said—"There were certainly many inconsistencies, besides his requiring a sum so immense, which, in the hurry and impetuosity of my feelings, I was not conscious of."

"And without weighing, without considering——" exclaimed Emily; the tears she had endeavoured to check stopped her utterance, and seeking to conceal them, she left the room.

Clanalvon vehemently arose, struck his forehead, and walked hastily to and fro.—"I have grieved her," he exclaimed—"I have allowed myself to be deceived, and she is to suffer for my folly! I have drawn her tears—oh! what is all the world to me, so she is happy! and yet my thoughtless violence, my weakness, is ever drawing me to sacrifice her peace to others!"

He was still wildly reproaching himself, and Mrs. Nugent still sitting in thoughtful and painful silence, when Emily returned.—"I believe," she said, "that I was unjust and impatient; I should have felt more the strong proof of your affection, in this lady's likeness to me having been the means to win upon your feelings. I am very grateful for it—indeed I am; but—but——" Again she had to struggle with her tears.

"But," said Mrs. Nugent, "your injustice towards Elizabeth and others—your constantly doing, in the hurry of your feelings, what, on serious reflection, you could not in justice or honesty do—your permitting yourself to be borne, by the stream of momentary feeling, to a length to which your every principle would check your going—your forgetfulness of an absent object in your interest for a present—all can only be excused on the recollection that you are but one-and-twenty."

"The super-generous, as sir James Gray calls it," added Emily, smiling through the tears which still glistened in her eyes, "at one-and-twenty may take place of the generous, but nothing should take place of the perfect justice natural to Clanalvon's and every truly-generous character."

With maternal kindness Mrs. Nugent endeavoured at once to calm his emotion, and to point out to him both the nature and boundary of true benevolence, as distinguished from that weak profusion which indulges its own awakened feelings at the expence of those which, though at the moment latent, are both more powerful and more intimately connected with duty and justice.

With doubtful hope Clanalvon went, early next morning, to captain Sutton's lodgings, to inquire if he had left town?

"Yes, sir," was the landlady's answer, "that has he, and joy go with him—that ever my house was disgraced with the like!"

"Was he alone?" said Clanalvon, anxiously—"how—when did he go?"

"Alone, indeed!—out of a quiet lone woman's house!—if you will walk into the parlour, and sit ye down, sir—Alone! no, sir; there was a young lady—a pretty creature she was!—Alone indeed! will you walk in, sir? you don't seem like one of his sort."

A young lady, and so much anger on the part of the decent landlady!—Clanalvon suspected the truth.

"Alone, sir?—no wonder for me to be out of my senses, though he paid the rent honest enough—alone, indeed!"

"What kind of a young lady?" asked Clanalvon.

"Kind! the kind fittest for him, to be sure. Kind indeed! what should she be, when she was with the like of that lord Belville this six months? that she should put her impudent foot into my respectable nice house! Bless me, sir! I beg your pardon, but you are turned as red as a turkey-cock! Well! such an innocent-faced creature to have call to the likes of him! sure you can't be no friend of his?"

Receiving no answer, she continued—"Somehow he got money for sure out of some one yesterday; for home he came, dancing, and capering, and singing, and laughing, and parcels of things he was buying, after him all day—myself thought he was drunk, as often he was—dear me, sir! I never seen you coming after him—and you are as red! dear me!—well, to think!"

Well might the indignation of his heart glow on his countenance. Duped, deceived, laughed at—Elizabeth injured—his creditors unpaid—his Emily's feelings wounded—Mrs. Nugent's esteem diminished—to enable a worthless profligate to fly from those he had imposed on—his name implicated in a transaction so infamous. Pride, delicacy, principle, honour, benevolence, natural affection, love—all were outraged—all were up in arms within him.

There are few feelings of the human heart more painful than anger thus powerfully and justly excited; perhaps the pang with which he faced the necessity of relating to his sisters and Emily the humiliating truth, was less acute than the consciousness of its existence.

An unexpected trial awaited him; when he returned home, full of the most indignant feelings he had ever experienced, he met Mr. Murphy, who, blessing him for his constant goodness, told him that the promised payment was become very necessary to them, and that had it not been offered, they would have been obliged to ask him for it. This was a worthy ingenious man, who, when Clanalvon was in college, had interested him so much, that by his influence and exertions he had raised him from very low business to the first fashion and practice; but his line having been abruptly changed, he, of course, wanted capital, and delay of payment seemed to threaten him and his numerous family with the deepest distress. Clanalvon, indeed, had at first given him a large sum to begin his more extensive trade; but Mr. Sutton, among others, having left Ireland deeply in his debt, had counterbalanced the benefit of this; so that, in fact, the kindness of his young patron had rather injured than served him.

It was with strong self-condemnation that Clanalvon related to Emily the discovery he had made respecting Sutton.—"And now," he said, "I almost fear that such duplicity, such artifice, such fiend-like wickedness in one person, will make me suspect others unjustly; but there are few Suttons."

"And fewer Clanalvons, alas!" said Emily, affectionately, while a sigh heaved her breast.

"Emily," said he, "I feel that for the world I would not injure a human being—I would not encroach on Lizzy's generosity, and, for ten thousand worlds, I would not give you pain. My heart is full of love to all my fellow-creatures, nor am I, on abstract subjects, deficient in understanding; why then is it, that I am ever injuring those dearest to me—ever going wrong?"

"Because," she answered, "when your feeling heart is touched, your head forgets to reason."

And this was indeed the only cause of his errors; for seldom was there an understanding more powerful, a judgment more clear and accurate; and in no human breast could beat a heart more excellent, more expansive than his.

A new source of uneasiness soon arose —the younger brother of Charles Montague's father had, early in life, married much beneath himself; and finding his family determined not to receive his wife, had, for her sake, abandoned his country, and settled in Russia. He now wrote to Charles, telling him, that though pride had prevented his seeking communication with a family which had cast him off, natural affection had prompted him to establish a correspondence with a friend, through whom he had constant intelligence of them; he found that Charles was destined to a profession which he had not entered; his wife and only child were dead; he felt that he could not long survive them, and he now entreated that his remaining life might be cheered by having seen and known the amiable child of his beloved brother. He sent money for the expences of the journey, and promised an equal provision for his return to Ireland; he had heard of his nephew's intended marriage, and hoped that his lovely bride would accompany him.

Charles had often heard his parents speak with affection of this brother, and had been reared in a desire to become acquainted with him; his own request now gave him an opportunity for it, and duty seemed to require his acceptance of the invitation. But it was a dreadful pang to leave his native country, for lady Clanalvon from the first moment assured him that Elizabeth could not accompany him, now that her own fortune was out of her power, and she could only go as a dependent on the bounty of this relation.—"Had she gone indeed," she said, "with wealth, with splendour, in all her natural loveliness, to sooth the last hours of one whose whole happiness he would find in her, attended by an idolizing husband, I would have parted with her; but, under present circumstances, it is impossible."

In vain was all Charles could urge;

though a weak woman, lady Clanalvon was fixed in any opinion she imbibed—it is impossible to bend water. Once his going was determined on, delay would have been rather an indulgence of weakness than an object of reasonable desire, and he resolved on setting out as soon as the necessary preparations could be made.

Elizabeth, though she felt it right to encourage his departure, bitterly and deeply lamented it; but far more severe were the feelings of Clanalvon—he reproached himself for the affliction of both on this first separation; every tear which wet her cheek, every sigh that heaved Montague's breast, inflicted on his heart a pang deeper than that which called them forth.

The evening when he was to sail, Clanalvon, Elizabeth, and Olivia, accompanied him to the Pigeon House, leaving Emily with their mother, who was detained at home by a cold.—"I trust," said Emily, fondly kissing lady Clanalvon, when her first burst of tears, on the carriage leaving the door, was past—"I trust that this sorrow is as groundless as it is natural; let us remember, that though dear Charles——"

"Charles!" she repeated; "indeed I feel most truly for dear Charles and my poor Lizzy; but my tears, Emily, were for the feelings of Clanalvon, who, though a third party, suffers more than either. He reproaches himself for their separation; as but for the involvement of her fortune, Lizzy would have gone with him as his wife. She did not think of this—she did not consider her brother's feelings, when she gave such free vent to her own."

Emily, though she habitually avoided, as much as possible, contradicting lady Clanalvon, particularly in her moments of awakened sensibility, could not forbear saying, that she thought Elizabeth had visibly made a powerful effort over her feelings on account of it.

"You could not think so," replied lady Clanalvon, "if you felt for him as I do. Poor fellow! it is his misfortune to feel more than he ought for every one, while no one feels as much as they ought for him, except his mother——and," she added, after a long pause, " one other." Who that other was, she soon made too manifest, by exclaiming, after another pause—" Oh, Emily! if you had her fortune—Cecilia Hazlewood's—what a blessing it would be! and"—(one fruit of lady Clanalvon's sensibility was, that when she was agitated she cared not, or knew not, what she said) " and, I must add, my dear Emily, her tenderness for him—her quick sensibility."

Had a thunderbolt descended on Emily's head at the moment, it could not have struck her with more violence. For some minutes she was unable to move or articulate, but at length recovering herself with an effort, she rung the bell, telling lady Clanalvon she must forgive her sending for a chair, instead of waiting for the hour at which she had appointed her own. To lady Clanalvon's repeated apologies and hopes that she had not said any thing to offend her, she only answered by mildly, though firmly, saying—"I am convinced that words so equally cruel to me and to Cecilia escaped you unawares."

But the dreadful words rung on her ear as she returned home—"Had I Cecilia's fortune and her tenderness!—her tenderness, too well I know, cannot excel mine; but her fortune might free him from all that weighs upon his spirits, while I can only be an added burden."

Never had ambition before swelled her artless breast, but now she wished every worldly wealth at her command, that she might shew him that hers indeed was love. A thousand painful recollections crowded on her mind—she knew that all his feelings were known to his mother, and she seemed to consider his engagement a misfortune. All his attentions to Cecilia, before considered as the fruit of his universal good-nature, took a new form; she now saw him bound to her by honour, and the habit of affection, while another had captivated his fancy. Much had she seen which might have earlier led her to this conclusion; but her frank, unsuspicious nature required something more than her own observation to awaken a doubt of those she loved; lady Clanalvon's words had this effect; and she now only wondered at her own blindness, in not having sooner perceived a diminution in his attentions to her, and an increasing animation in those to Cecilia. That Cecilia loved him she was well convinced, but could not believe that her love equalled her own.

Never had Emily endured so much agitation, but hers was not a mind ever to lose its own balance. She was sensitive, proud, and ardently warm in her affections; but she was indulgent and considerate for others—mild, and capable of distinguishing between the apprehension and the reality of an injury—and the warmth of her affections was not greater than their tenderness, and perfectly free from that tenacious susceptibility which makes many people more prompt to quarrel with their friends than their enemies.

She therefore determined to wait, and not risk wounding Clanalvon's feelings by the expression of a doubt, excited more by the words of another than his own actions: whatever emotions agitated her breast, fair, clear-sighted justice rose triumphant above the storm.

When Clanalvon and his sisters returned home at night, they were surprised at not finding Emily there. Lady Clanalvon at first accounted for her leaving her so early, by saying she believed she had a headache; but perceiving the anxiety of her son, who well knew that no trifle could have made Emily fly from affliction which she might alleviate, she told him that, in her excessive agitation on seeing him so afflicted, she had reproached Emily for the calmness with which she bore it, as a proof of want of affection, mentioning the greater sensibility towards him of Cecilia Hazlewood, which had displeased Emily, who then went.

Lady Clanalvon had not avoided telling the fact at once, from a desire to save herself from blame, but from being so violently irritated against Emily, that she thought a relation of her conduct must wound his feelings.

When she and Olivia had retired for the night, Elizabeth, who, in her own feelings, never lost sight of the concerns of others, depressed and languid as she was, remained with her brother, to remove any impression her mother's account of Emily's conduct had made on his mind. —"Do you really think," said she, "that Emily has shewn you coldness to-day?"

"Of course she has," he replied, "or my mother would not imagine it; nor can she be blamed for considering me unworthy of her."

"Clanalvon," said Elizabeth, "ask mamma to repeat every word that passed. I fear you will find that she has been unkind to Emily, but I am convinced you will not find that Emily has so far forgotten all that she ever was, as to have said or thought any thing inconsistent with the most perfect mildness and justice."

"I know it," answered Clanalvon; "but surely her being cold towards me is not blameable. Have I not deserved more? have I not at every hour given her cause to hate, instead of being merely careless of me? have I not been cruel towards her in my enthusiasm for others? I feel that she is, and ever was faultless, and that *once* she loved me."

"My present object," said Elizabeth, "is not to argue against this wild over-ruling sensibility, which makes you exaggerate your own faults into crimes, which ought to deprive you of affection. I want to ask you another question—I believe that from your heart you love Emily as much as you ever could have done; am I right? or does the world speak truth, in saying you prefer the wealthy and fascinating Cecilia?"

"Prefer Cecilia to my Emily!" exclaimed Clanalvon, starting from his seat —"impossible! no one could have said it —no one could dare to say it!"

" Many have said it, and many have believed it," she replied.

" Prefer Miss Hazlewood, lovely, sensitive, endearing as she is, to Emily, the first, the noblest, the softest, the most feeling of human beings!—impossible! ridiculous! no one could believe it!"

" Many can believe it," repeated Elizabeth; " at times even Emily herself believes it."

" Then she does not love me," said Clanalvon—" often, often have I lately thought she has given me many instances of her diminished affection."

" Name one," said Elizabeth.

" Did you not remark her coldness the morning we went to see the Dargle?"

" I remarked," answered Elizabeth, "your preferable attentions to Miss Hazlewood, and I remarked that the pride you justly admire in Emily taught her to conceal the pain she felt at them; she accepted Charles's arm; and Miss Hazlewood, had you neglected her, would have walked alone, in melancholy silence."

Clanalvon blushed, for he knew that a secret consciousness of this had greatly influenced his attentions towards her: his sister continued—"And for this reason, to prevent her making herself ridiculous, you wounded the feelings of her whose modest and delicate sense of propriety rendered such a risk impossible; but tell me candidly, do you still love Emily?"

"I adore her," cried Clanalvon, warmly.

"I know you love her—it is impossible to know her worth as intimately as you do, and not to love her; but does she still hold her place in your fancy—your admiration? You once thought her lovely, as she is estimable—do you not now find more attraction in the manners of Miss Hazlewood?"

"Far, very far from it—her smile—her slightest word—the very ground she treads on, are more precious to me than all the pleasures of life; I look up to her—I idolize her."

"She loves you," said his sister; "you know she does, and shews it in the sweetest manner, when your own neglect does not render it inconsistent with her truly-feminine delicacy for her to do so."

"You will drive me mad, Lizzy."

"Far better," said she, with a smile, "grow tame, and endeavour to correct the errors I point out to you; but now tell me seriously, what are your intentions towards her rival?"

"Her rival, Lizzy! what an expression! Emily's rival!" exclaimed Clanalvon.

"Well, what are your sentiments towards that amiable romantic girl, who has every reason to believe you love her?"

"When I first knew Miss Hazlewood," said Clanalvon, reseating himself, "I considered her the friend of Emily; as such she must be worthy, and as such I esteemed and admired her. Her unhappy situation, living alone, as it were, on earth, and her exquisite sensibility, won my tenderest pity—you cannot blame this: a creature so friendless, so lovely——"

"Certainly not," said Elizabeth.

"I soon found," he continued, "that

next to that of Emily, she enjoyed my conversation; and I found that it was sometimes in my power to change into smiles and pleasure the sadness which overwhelmed her. I do love her—I love her as Emily loves her, and she loves me as the husband of her friend."

"Oh, Clanalvon! then why allow her friend to be neglected, that you may devote yourself to her?"

"Emily is not neglected; every time I am drawn away from her, some particular circumstance requires it."

"Nay, Clanalvon," said Elizabeth, "it is by one circumstance variously modified—your apprehension, as I said before, that any neglect of Cecilia will cause so marked a change in her manner, as may expose her to unpleasant observations. Perhaps there may be one other circumstance too—your own vanity may be gratified by the openly-avowed pleasure she takes in your conversation; and this gratification may hide itself from your own eyes, under the form of a generous pleasure, in giving pleasure to an interesting, discontented being."

"You wrong me, Lizzy; it is not vanity—there is no man living whose vanity would not be ten thousand times more gratified by one smile of Emily's; but Miss Hazlewood is so unhappy."

"In what is she unhappy, except the natural bias of her own mind?" said Elizabeth; "it is for this I just now called her discontented rather than unhappy, which you seemed to start at as a very unsentimental expression. But though weak-minded, she is worthy and estimable; and I see, with painful solicitude, that you are preparing for her the real unhappiness of a bitter disappointment. Does she know of your engagement with Emily?"

"Of course she does," replied Clanalvon; "I believe it is very generally known; but, believe me, Lizzy, you are quite mistaken as to her sentiments towards me. I know she has no attachment which Emily's husband might not return; but if *you* think otherwise, I will take care to avoid any thing that can give you uneasiness on her account."

Emily awakened next morning with a feeling of misery which had never before visited her placid and cheerful breast. She had sunk to sleep at a late hour, after having persuaded herself that it was a weakness to be so much moved by the sentiment which another, and not Clanalvon himself, had expressed, and wondered at the heaviness of heart, which, in spite of all her efforts and reasonings, still oppressed her. Her reverie was broken through by the entrance of the daughter of Clanalvon's coachmaker, whom Emily had taken into the house.—"Oh, ma'am!" she exclaimed, "my poor father is ruined—we are all burned out and undone!"

"Burned!" repeated Emily.

"Yes, ma'am—the house, and every thing in it, except the yard."

"But none of the family hurt, I hope?"

"Oh no! they all escaped, except poor

little Johnny—the child, you know, ma'am, that was sick, that you were subscribing for."

"Poor baby! sure he has not perished in the flames?"

"No, ma'am; but dragging him out of his bed, and the confusion and uproar—he is worse than ever; and my mother does not know what to do till you come to see him, ma'am."

While Emily rose and hastily dressed herself, she gave a more distinct account of the calamity which had taken place. Emily was ready as soon as the carriage, and with Catherine Murphy drove to the house to which the family had been removed. The room to which she was conducted was close and small—the children loitered about it, in different attitudes of languor—and near the fireplace, to avoid the air of the door, sat Mrs. Murphy, with the sick child on her knees. It was feverish and ill; and taking it in her own arms, Emily sent the mother for proper medicines.

No thought of self interrupted her watch over the infant's uneasy slumber, yet she reflected with extreme pain, that this calamity would put the family in urgent want of the money which Clanalvon owed them, and which he had deprived himself of the power of paying immediately; she also knew that in his zeal to serve them, he had recommended Murphy to many customers not in the habit of paying their debts, who had given large and expensive orders. Of the distress already occasioned by this, she had become aware during her previous care of the sick child, for whom the mother had solicited Mrs. Nugent's advice, because she had not guineas "to throw away upon doctors."

The heat of the room, and her secret agitation, had raised a warm and brilliant colour on her cheek, with which her languid eyes formed a melancholy contrast. Her fair arm supporting the infant's head, she looked like the angel of pity assuaging the sufferings of innocence. The door opened, and she turned, expecting to see the mother, but it was Clanalvon, who stood, speechless with emotion, regarding her.

Emily did not rise, as she could not remove the child, but she held out her hand, while the bright tints of agitation yielded to deathlike paleness. He had come to inquire about the family, to be the comforter of the afflicted; and what she had considered a mere duty in herself, she secretly extolled as a virtue in him.—"My Emily, my life, you are not well," he tenderly whispered, taking her hand; "has not Mrs. Nugent observed it? every instant your colour changes—you must have advice. Do not, my Emily, let the delight of a fond parent, the supporter of the poor, the sole happiness of a lover, perish for want of those cares daily lavished on others; you should not have come out;" and as he kissed her hand, the tenderness of his manner thrilled through her heart, with an emotion of joy as lively and as sudden as if the doubts which had glanced over her mind the preceding night, and been almost denied admittance, had been dreadful realities, now in a moment reversed.

Mrs. Murphy soon returned, having procured all that was necessary for the child; blessings were poured on the benevolence of Miss Nugent and lord Clanalvon. A look from him seemed to ask when the names should be united? Seldom had Emily felt more fluttered joy than she now experienced: she rose to depart, with every doubt of his affection effaced from her mind, and conversed with him, as he led her to the carriage, with a sweetness and vivacity which removed from his mind every trace of the painful impressions his mother's observations on her coldness had left there, and also his recent alarm at her appearance of ill health. Having arranged with her what hour he would find her at home, he returned to the afflicted family they had left.

Elizabeth's entreaties for some days

after checked his constant visits to, and attendance on Cecilia Hazlewood; but as he was wilfully blind to the strong ground on which her apprehension rested, it was not to be expected that his resolution should resist much temptation.

Still some soft reproach, which any one but himself would have attributed to its true cause, assailed him for his neglect, and raising her soft blue eyes to his face, she would add, with a sigh—"I have so little enjoyment of life! but perhaps I should not encroach on the pleasures of others!"

To read her words, Cecilia must seem, in every sense of the term, a coquette and a flirt; but those who saw the perfect modesty, the even bashful timidity of her mien and manners, and the quick-changing colour, the strongly-marked alterations of countenance, speaking the intense feelings of her mind, traced them to their real source—an over-wrought and too-much-indulged sensibility, which almost compelled her to yield to every impulse as it arose.

No two women, both amiable and respectable, could be more different, in many respects, than the two ladies who were considered by the world rival candidates for the heart and hand of the young earl of Clanalvon.

Emily possessed, in a high degree, both the reality and the charm of beauty—Cecilia much of the latter; but, except fine eyes and hair, and a pretty, though minute figure, none of the former. The looks of Emily presented to the mind at first view the idea of the innocent cheerfulness of a happy heart, at peace with itself and all around her, and, as different feelings were acted on by circumstances, varied to the natural but never-exaggerated expression of each.

The look of Cecilia was languid, dejected, and what sentimental minds call interesting; her feelings were not easily aroused, but, when they were, expressed themselves with peculiar energy of words, tones, countenance, and gesture.

The manners of Emily were easy, kind, and cordial to every one; glad to please, and easily pleased. Those of Cecilia cold, even to unpoliteness, towards those she did not particularly like, and to those she did, warm and caressing, even to enthusiasm; but to these they were *exigeantes* and monopolizing; while Emily, with those she loved, seemed to live in them and for them. The caresses of Cecilia were most valued by the vain—those of Emily by the affectionate. Cecilia accordingly had many admirers, but there were also many who hated, envied, and criticised her. An eulogium on her person, manners, or musical talents, seldom failed to bring forward all the mothers of prettier but less-admired girls.—"Dear me! can you think her pretty with such a nose?"—"And such a skin! did you ever see her in daylight?"—"Her manners may be well enough to those she likes, but to those she does not, she is as rude as a bear."—"And, when she does speak, such attitudes—so much emphasis!"—"And all her concerns are so much more important than other people's."—"Her singing is delightful, but she never stops till one is sick of it."—"Or, if she is not in the humour for it, the world would not prevail on her to begin." While Emily, from delicacy of taste, and quick perception of excellence of every kind, being ever ready to point out the beauty and attractions of others, was envied by none, and every commendation of her on any one point served but as the introduction to a rapid enumeration of other perfections.

Neither in beauty, attraction, understanding, or merit, could Clanalvon place Cecilia in the smallest competition with Emily, but she distinguished him as the object of her peculiar admiration; and from the habit of her mind and manner distinguished him exclusively, and sat isolated in a crowd when he was not at her side. To his judgment she appealed for the books she should read—to his taste for the music she should purchase, and frequently gave him commissions, which could have been as well executed by her footman; and this often for no other reason than that it was easier to say, while speaking on the subject—"Do get it for me," than to give directions to a common messenger.

These appeals, these commissions, necessarily led to morning visits, which Clanalvon always determined should be short, but which were always rendered long, by his unwillingness to give her pain by an abrupt departure, while she evidently wished to detain him; and by degrees they encroached on the hours formerly devoted to Emily.

One morning, about a fortnight after his conversation with lady Elizabeth on the evening of Charles's departure, when he called on her with a song she had desired him to choose for her, he found lord Belville just leaving the room, Cecilia seated at a distance, apparently wrapped in thought, and Mrs. Hastings standing near her, looking discomposed and angry. As he approached Cecilia, he perceived that she was weeping; advancing one hand towards him, she continued with the other to conceal her face.

Clanalvon could not ask the cause of her tears, and there was a silence of some minutes, which Mrs. Hastings seemed too much vexed to break.

Miss Hazlewood then raised her head. —"I believe," said she, "that to lord Clanalvon I may explain this extraordinary scene. Lord Belville has so far honoured me as to demand me of my guardian in marriage. This day he came to ask my consent, and I believe Mrs. Hastings is offended by my answer."

"Not by your answer, Cecilia, but the manner of it," said Mrs. Hastings, leaving the room.

"Have you accepted him?" exclaimed Clanalvon.

A momentary glance of Cecilia's eyes spoke the pain she felt at the question.— "Accepted him! no, lord Clanalvon! do not think so lowly of me as to consider him a man to tempt me from the single life on which I am determined. No! no! I never could have married such a man, and *now*——"

"He is unworthy of you," said Clanalvon; "but why such a general determination?—why, at your age, determine to deprive yourself of that union of soul, that confiding perfection of mutual attachment, in which alone true happiness is to be found?"

A sweet but melancholy smile played on Cecilia's features. He continued.—"Formed as you are to ornament domestic life—to spread joy around you—to be the idol of a husband, do not—do not yield the glorious privilege!"

"My days of joy are gone!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears; "never can I know that union of soul, that perfection of attachment, where it might have been—where dispositions and tastes might have answered. I know I must not——" She stopped.

Clanalvon grasped her hand. He sunk on his knee before her. Love, Emily, every thing was forgotten in the sentiment of pity. He gazed on her, with a new feeling. Too plainly he at length saw that she loved him. He sprung from the ground.—"I must not—dare not stay," he exclaimed, pressing her hand to his lips. The recollection of his Emily came to his mind. Again he respectfully kissed her hand, and left her. . . . .

He was in a state of distraction. He knew not how to act towards her, nor would he consult even his sister Elizabeth on the subject. The day was passed in painful meditations, and as painful efforts to conceal his feelings from his family; nor did the subject ever quit his mind until late in the following evening, when he was sadly awakened to the recollection of an engagement he had neglected. Murphy had informed him, that a person to whom he was indebted five hundred pounds had threatened to arrest him the following day, if he was not able to pay it;

and about this business he was going when he called on Cecilia, intending to stay but a few minutes; nor can it be wondered at, that Murphy and the five hundred pounds never recurred to his memory, until, in passing through the hall, he was met by one of Murphy's children.

Her father had been seized and carried to prison; his wretched wife had followed him there, and sent this little girl to implore the succour of lord Clanalvon.—"It is only five hundred pounds, my lord," said the girl; "that is nothing out of your pocket, that often gives twice as much to relieve a less distress than ours."

His mind was so completely thrown off its balance by the different vexations and self-accusations that pressed upon it, that even, had he been in the habit of reflecting before he acted, he would have been at this moment incapable of it. Telling the girl her father should have the money early next morning, he snatched his hat, and flew to the gaming-table.

A party was soon ready to bet against

him; he played high, and lost almost every cast, but fortunately did not continue long enough to involve himself deeper than one thousand pounds.

As he hastened he knew not whither, a lady, alighting from her carriage, crossed on his path—it was Emily Nugent.—"We have met to join parties," she said, and her cheering voice recalled Clanalvon to recollection; but the lamp now glared on his countenance. Her affectionate inquiries died on her lips, when she looked on the wild and agonized expression of his features, and she remained silent from alarm.

"Emily! oh, Emily!" he exclaimed, wringing her hand, and before she could speak, he rushed past her.

Shocked and terrified at she knew not what, Emily clung to the arm of her aunt, who perceiving her utterly unfit to enter company, and wishing to withdraw her from observation, instantly ordered the servants home.

A duel was the first idea that occurred, and with it the first impulse to drive to his house, and try to speak to him; but this Mrs. Nugent prevented, by reasoning with, and shewing her that such a step could only be attended by injurious consequences.

His keen and rash sensibility rendered it impossible that any representations of the sin of duelling could deter him from it, if he felt his honour pledged to it; it could but agonize his mind ineffectually, and female interference, in any other way, was generally followed by imputations and sarcasms, which must be cleared away by a deeper risk than that it was intended to prevent. In fact, every suspected duel in a family leaves the female part of it under one of the severest trials the human mind can be put to—that of quiescent, powerless stillness, under the most intense and restless anxiety.

Such was the night passed by Mrs. Nugent and Emily. At six o'clock, and again at seven and at eight, they sent to know from the porter if he had gone out: he was still in bed. Their apprehensions of a duel were now exchanged for vague conjectures, and Emily endeavoured to refresh her appearance, with affectionate solicitude not to shock him by her pale and harassed looks when he came, as she every moment expected he would, with an explanation.

As she stood at the window watching for him, she saw, at an earlier hour than is usual for visitors, the carriage of Mrs. Mansfield drive up to the door. She entered with her two daughters, all too brimfull of news they had to communicate, to notice the agitated countenance of Emily.

"Well, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Mansfield, "so your friend, Miss Hazlewood, is going to be married."

"To whom?" cried Emily, roused from her own anxiety by concern for her friend: "not, I hope, lord Belville?"

"No, indeed, my dear, a much better

match—our mutual friend, your favourite, Mrs. Nugent—dear, handsome, generous lord Clanalvon."

Incredulity, for a moment, as a shield, warded off this blow from Emily's heart; but as she listened, with breathless eagerness, to the details, the defence grew weaker and weaker.

"I will tell you the particulars of how we know it and every thing," said Mrs. Mansfield, with the consequential air of a person entrusted with state affairs.—"We had noticed his attentions as very marked, for he was ever in and out of the house, with some book or some song, or some loverly nonsense; and Maria has so much drollery, she was never from the window watching them."

"And I am sure," interrupted Maria, called on for a witty observation, "it was not to see Mrs. Hastings he went—such an old fright, with her grey hair!"

The mother smiled, and continued—"Well, to make a long story short, he was never out of the house these six weeks; and I was beginning to suspect, for if you had seen the loverly impatience till the door was opened, knocking ten times in a minute, and when he came out, tripping over every stone in the street."

"Oh, you would have died laughing," exclaimed Maria, "if you had seen him tripping over his dog! I am so glad we live opposite to her!"

"But yesterday," pursued the mother, "as usual, we saw him flying there all life and animation—song as usual—seeming to think he would never be up the steps. But in ten minutes, think how surprised we must have been! He flung open the door, and rushed out like a madman, wild with joy and agitation; and my Maria (always, you know, so good-natured—Maria is certainly the most kind-hearted creature on earth, as lady P—— says), thinking something must be the matter, just threw a veil over her head, and ran across to speak to Cecilia Hazlewood. Maria, love, tell Emily, in your own droll way."

"Oh, I declare you never saw any thing so funny: I could not tell whether she was laughing or crying, but her breast was heaving as if she was in convulsions: you never saw any thing so droll! I could scarcely help laughing; and only think, she had her face hid in the sofa. I was longing to see her blushes; and you know her odd, familiar manner—you would have died laughing. She waved her hand at me, and, think how rude! asked me why the servants let me in without asking her, and ran out of the room. Think how droll!"

"I never heard," said Mrs. Mansfield, "of two creatures so agitated. I had a mind to ask lady Olivia the event of the eclaircissement, but, as I perceive, *entre nous*, that there is some drawback to their happiness, I thought it as well not. Among friends, Mrs. Nugent, it appears to me that some other affair, on one side or other, checks the marriage, and you wont mention it, of course. I have reason to think it is on his. But, Emily, my dear! my goodness! my sweet girl! I had no idea! you are so pale! I really thought it was only family friendship. My dear Emily, I beg your pardon. I had no idea, believe me. I beg your pardon, my love, ten thousand times."

The truant colour returned to the cheek of Emily, as raising her dark eyes, she coolly asked—"For what, ma'am?"

These were the first words bordering on falsehood she had ever uttered, and though they were prompted by a feeling she herself approved, she blushed in speaking them. The modest dignity of her look and manner checked the "Dear, how droll!" on the lips of Miss Maria.

Mrs. Mansfield looked baffled and provoked, and remained silent.

"It is impossible," said Mrs. Nugent, gravely, "that we should not be deeply interested in the subject, from our intimate connexion with both parties; but I believe your idea is groundless."

"But I believe not!" exclaimed Mrs. Mansfield and Maria in a breath, and then entered into particulars, unable to bear that any one should know more of the affairs of a lord than they did. Among many proofs, one struck particularly to the heart of Emily.—"Dear, it is impossible they are not to be married. Cecilia Hazlewood would not be so improper as to go on as she does, if they were not. It is certainly true. La, Jane! don't you remember, last Thursday, when she was singing for him?"

"When she frowned at us," replied the sister, laughing, "and seemed to think us so troublesome."

"She was singing that odious 'Maid of Selma.' How I hate it! I have such a passion for Moore! Have not you, Emily? She has a fine voice, but I could point out a hundred places where she could ornament and does not. I don't like her manner."

"Certainly Maria has more taste in music," interrupted the mother.

"And he was hanging over her," continued Maria, "as if every note went to his heart—so droll!—and she gazing up at him—you know her way with him, and the eyes she puts on!"

"I could not help remarking," observed Miss Jane Mansfield, tittering, "how odd his handsome face looked, leaning over her, as if he thought she was an angel, and I am sure he looked more like one himself. Didn't he, Misy?"

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Maria. "It was so droll, you know, to see a man so much handsomer than a woman, and his fine auburn hair almost touching her nasty light hair; I hate light hair, you must know—and his clear, dark skin; one could not help noticing how pale and lifeless hers is; and his beautiful arched black eyebrows, and hers are so low—and his fine regular teeth; and that sweet look about the corners of his mouth, as if he was going to smile, even when he is not smiling:—one must see the difference when she sets her face up at him so—I am sure, she knows every feature and turn of his face by heart—she could tell you how many hairs he has in those long eyelashes of his. La! what would I take to gaze in any man's face that way!"

She ran on uninterrupted, and almost unheard. Both Emily and Mrs. Nugent recollected, that on the day to which she alluded, Emily had been singing the same song for him; and that scarcely had she finished it, when he hastily left her, as it now appeared, to hear it repeated by Cecilia. The fact was, that he had started away on the striking of the clock, announcing to him that he was an hour late for an appointment Cecilia had made with him, to hear her take her singing lesson, that she might have his opinion of her master. He had merely told them that he had an engagement, not wishing to mention the nature of it, on account of the observations to her disadvantage, respecting him, which he knew to be in circulation.

"I must say," said Mrs. Mansfield, "it is a great shame for him, after making such desperate love to Maria; and to you too, Emily, didn't he?" The indignant blood of Emily rose even to her temples. —"You need not blush, my dear. Nobody can say he has changed for the better; and so lady P——, and Mrs. F——, and every one, said, the other night. Every one wonders at him. She is not to be compared to either of you: but when he has jilted Maria Mansfield, I am sure, as Mrs. O—— said, no woman need be ashamed of his doing the same by her."

This consolation served only to heighten the anger of Emily, but it seemed as if even this ungenial passion could not enter the pure region of her breast without some accompaniment of good: anger and indignation for a moment occupied the place of grief and disappointment, and prevented her exposing to Mrs. Mansfield the feelings which, had they burst on her in their full force, she might have been unable to conceal.

The Mansfields went, and Emily flew to lock herself into her own room, to conceal her feelings, even from her aunt.

The tears she then shed were the bitterest that had ever fallen from her eyes; a new, unknown, indescribable feeling of agony filled her breast; never before had that placid breast heaved with a tumultuous agony that defied the control of reason; never had she before experienced that impetuosity of anguish which excludes the idea of happiness from every object but one endangered blessing; never before had she felt the pang of self-reproach, which now mingled with her feelings, accusing them at one moment of a too-hasty conclusion against the faith and honour of a man lately beloved with such unclouded esteem—at another, of too much fond idolatry, in having placed too large a portion of her happiness in the power of earthly contingencies.

After a long and painful struggle, she at length attained a species of resignation, in which various feelings mingled; among these were predominant the only source of true resignation, and a latent hope that the heart of Clanalvon, though wandering, was not, could not, be really estranged from her. Gradually the agony of her countenance disappeared; her fair brow regained its mild placidity, and her tearful eyes were serene, though no longer glancing the radiant lustre which, when her heart was at ease, diffused joy around her. A mild but settled sorrow took possession of every feeling that trembled on the borders of irritation and impatience. She felt sensible that she ought to form a resolution for which she had not yet sufficient firmness, and she went to seek strength in the affectionate counsels of her aunt.

Reading, in the countenance of Mrs. Nugent, a tender anxiety, of which delicacy forbad the expression, Emily advanced to kiss her, with a smile which sadly reminded her of the looks of her niece in happier days. She could not, in that moment, begin a conversation so agitating, but, in the evening, throwing one fair arm around the neck of Mrs. Nugent, she said—"Our thoughts, dear aunt, I know, are fixed on the one object, though neither of us have yet had courage to speak them. Mrs. Mansfield is not a woman who would tell an absolute falsehood; besides, our own observation must corroborate the principal part of what she said. Remember his agonized look last night—Oh, aunt! do I feel it with blameable intensity?" she added, in a suffocated voice.

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Nugent; "but we shall both become blameable, if you suffer inactively. I have for some weeks past felt that Clanalvon, to whom I once gladly trusted my child's happiness, is of a character too light, too weak, for such a mind as yours."

"Oh, aunt!" exclaimed Emily, "he is not light—he is not weak—he is but unsteady—he suffers the object present to engross every feeling. In his neglect of me for Cecilia, he only rejoices in the power of giving her pleasure, without remembering that he gives me pain, or the disappointment, I think—dear aunt, may I not say I hope?—he is preparing for her—he loves me at the bottom of his heart—I know he does; remember, last night, his agonized 'oh, Emily!' but from unsteadiness he is too often led into forgetfulness of that love. Cecilia has captivated his fancy—fascinating and amiable as she is, it is not wonderful; but he would be less happy with me than he would have been—many a sigh would be given to her memory, or at least I should fancy it. I could not, if we married under present circumstances, feel myself the wife of his free unconfined choice, as once I did."

Tears made her last words almost inaudible; Mrs. Nugent silently clasped this earthly idol of her affections to her breast.—"From you," said Emily, at length, "I need not conceal how much I loved him—he mingled in every feeling. Devotedly I loved him—too much, perhaps." Emily blushed deeply, and dropping her head on her aunt's shoulder, she continued—"And I am not ashamed of it; it is no selfish love; for I would rather this moment give up the hope of ever more seeing him, than risk one thought of his ever turning to the idea, that he might have been happier had not honour bound him to me—he shall be free."

"You are right," my darling," said Mrs. Nugent; "but——" she paused.

"But," said Emily, "I cannot see him —I cannot speak what I have to say—I could not command my emotion; and the same weakness in his disposition which has beguiled him from me, would lead him back; and on those terms I cannot receive him. I must write, and had better do it instantly; for if fuller conviction reached me, perhaps I could not; even now I feel very ill," she added, putting her hand to her forehead.

Her aunt, who feared by caresses to awaken her sensibility, gazed on her in silence, and quietly arranged the writing materials. As Emily took the pen from her hand, she held it back a moment, and said—"My Emily, we have one point yet to consider—we now both indulge the hope that he will voluntarily renew the ties from which you free him; but if——"

"But if," said Emily, firmly, "he should not do so, I shall bear it better—much better, than the doubt that I hold him by honour only."

Her letter was as follows:—

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"If you look back on the events of the last month, and particularly the last week, and if you thoroughly understand my character, what I have now to say cannot be wholly unexpected. To deny that I have loved you, dearly loved you, would be an affectation unworthy equally of you and of myself; you were every way entitled to the undivided heart of the woman distinguished by your love; and no rank or wealth, you well know, could have tempted me to promise my hand where my heart was not already bestowed. I believe that you also sincerely and fondly loved me—no other motive could have determined your choice to me; but recent circumstances have given me too much reason to think that much of your affection for me has been led away to other objects; if this be true—if you are bound to me by no stronger ties than that of our mutual engagement, and your consciousness of my affection for you, those ties are broken at your wish. Clanalvon, you are free, as if no such engagement, no such attachment, had ever existed—free to make a new choice, even though I should not be the object of it.

"EMILY NUGENT."

As she finished writing, the pen fell from her hand, a deadly paleness crept over her cheeks, and her whole frame trembled. Mrs. Nugent rose to support her; but in a few minutes raising her head, with a faint smile she said—"It is only weakness, dearest aunt; I know that his answer will be such as to restore me to perfect happiness; but I am ill—very ill, and that disposes me to see the darkest side of things."

Her aunt insisted on her going immediately to bed, and, while undressing her, communicated to her the plan she had arranged, with which Emily perfectly accorded. She proposed to set off for Riversdale early the next morning, leaving the letter to be delivered after their departure.

When Clanalvon passed Emily the preceding night, his mind was in all the irritating tumult of self-reproach; the harmony of her smile and voice, the unconscious cheerfulness of her address, and her hand affectionately extended to his—all wrought up his feelings to a pitch of agony almost amounting to phrenzy; she loved him, and rejoiced to meet him, as the deserving partner of her heart, while a few hours might bring to her knowledge what would teach her to abhor and despise him; he had wantonly thrown away at the gaming-table money which was the right of the distressed father of a numerous family, and that family one towards whom he had seen her exert such endearing acts of charity. He had, in the blind infatuation of his vanity, suffered himself to be considered the lover of another—had cherished in a young and innocent heart a hopeless attachment—and, perhaps, raised against Emily all the enmity of rivalry in the bosom of her favourite friend.

In these self-accusations he overlooked every better motive which had misled him, and charged himself as bitterly as if they were the foreseen effects of determined wickedness; while the words he had once addressed to Emily thrilled upon his heart —"Consider every fault I commit as a violation of my love for you;" and as he pressed her unconscious image to his lips, he scarcely ventured to whisper the name of its injured original.

In despairing agonies the night was passed; but as the morning advanced, he became somewhat more composed, and determined on repairing, as far as yet remained in his power, his late errors, by exerting himself immediately, and before he should see Emily, for the discharge of his debt to Murphy; for this purpose it was necessary he should go to sir James Gray.

Touched by his real grief and penitence, this kind friend promised to assist his endeavours to raise the money; instead of his usual animadversions on his conduct, he told him that he saw plainly that experience, and not advice, must set him right, and he perceived by his countenance that it was beginning to work.—"I had hoped," added the good man, "to have applied a gentler remedy to your errors; but all will end well yet—your mother and your youth have been more in fault than your head or your heart."

Clanalvon then went to the prisoner, and by his promises of speedy liberation, and every exertion on his part, gave a more solid, but not more real consolation to Murphy and his wife, than they received from the cordial sweetness of his manner, and the kind solicitude with which he thought of every thing that could render their present situation less uncomfortable during the hours they must remain in it.

Those in the higher classes who neglect the graces of manner, are highly censurable, for throwing away one of the powers committed to them for the happiness of others, particularly in Ireland, where the pride and sensibility of the national character render the manner of doing a kindness often a source of greater pleasure than the favour conferred.

" Well, at any rate, John," said the wife, when their young patron was gone, " if you are in a prison, the king of England could not have more fuss and more elegance about him, nor a finer young nobleman after him, thanks to that dear angel, that is always in good, even when harm comes of it!"

But he now left them only to attend to their business—to Emily he could not bear to go; he had heard that she, on the moment of Murphy's imprisonment, of which she was informed by his daughter, had provided every necessary for the family—had gone with her aunt to see the children—had left a servant to take care of them—had been, in short, the guardian angel of the family, of which he believed himself the destroyer; and he could not bear that those eyes once beaming on him with admiring affection, should now seek to avoid his. He thought that when these objects of her pity were no longer suffering through him, he might see her, but till then he could not think of doing so.

But agitated and anxious as was his mind, he entered into and completed the business for Murphy with as much zeal and activity as if he had no other care. Next morning Clanalvon had the happiness of seeing him restored to his family, by his exertions, united with those of sir James; and reassured by their blessings, he proceeded to the house of Mrs. Nugent, determined to relate all to her and Emily: but his knock did not bring Emily to the window, to assure him, by a smile, of his welcome. The window-shutters were closed; and after long waiting, a female servant opened the door; the distracted state of his nerves made every thing inspire him with dread, and his manly frame trembled through every fibre, as he inquired for Mrs. Nugent.

“ They left town at six o'clock this morning, my lord,” replied the maid.

“ Left town!” he repeated—“ where are they gone? when do they return? is there no letter for me?”

“ Yes, my lord,” said the woman, producing a packet; “ I intended to go up with it by-and-by; it is to Riversdale they are gone, my lord. The mistress wrote to give up the house last night, for I have the letter in my pocket.”

Clanalvon opened the parlour-door, and threw himself on a seat by the dinner-table, where Emily had so often smiled by his side; he tried to believe that the letter directed by her hand contained only a kind farewell, and that they had been hurried from town by sudden business; yet it was long before he could break the seal. The sight of his own picture at once informed him of the contents—every word appeared to him to express a knowledge of his faults, and a desire to be free; he thought she had heard of his visit to the gaming-table, and felt his not having himself confessed it to her, was proof that she had lost an affection which she no longer wished to retain.

So long had she been twined in every thought as his better self—so long had he felt his life, as his heart, irrevocably devoted to her—his fate mingled in hers, that this letter seemed like the sundering of the ties which unite soul and body. A stupefaction, an incredulity of grief, for a time deprived him of every faculty. Emily gone! Emily no longer his affianced bride! —his mind could scarcely receive the idea! but as he read the letter over and over again, the impetuous sensibility of his nature revived in fatal force. All his late errors—Cecilia—the gaming-table—rose in magnified array before him.—"And could I have desired a continuance of her love!" he wildly exclaimed; "no, no—Emily is too pure, too perfect, too heavenly, to attach herself to one so guilty, so unprincipled—she must have been less perfect. No, she is free—'Her attachment,' she says, 'no longer forms a tie between her and me;' and I will not draw her back into an engagement which, I should long since have seen, she must wish to dissolve; though, if she knew my misery, she would alleviate it. But no—since her attachment no longer forms a tie between us, she is free."

Thus did he rave in agonized despair for several hours, but at length returning reason led him home. Reason did not there long hold her empire; indignant, offended pride, affected lady Clanalvon, as sorrow had done her too-susceptible boy. She too raved, but in a very different manner; her exclamations were all against Emily, who had, she said, deserted him in a manner equally cruel and decided;

her irritated pride even led her to exclaim —"It is not wonderful; the beautiful admired Emily Nugent may justly expect a higher match than even an earl of Clanalvon under your present circumstances."

Such an insinuation could make no impression on the mind of Clanalvon, but drew from him a look of more anger than any personal injury could have induced him to cast on his mother. She alternately wept over her "darling injured child," and inflicted on his heart the deepest of all pangs, in violent censures of Emily; while he imputed, and wished every other person to impute, their separation wholly to his own faults.

But while he exculpated her, he was, as usual, more influenced by his feelings than his judgment; he loved her too well to endure the idea of her being wrong; while, in fact, had her conduct been in reality what he conceived it to be—a breach of her engagement with him, on account of errors from which her influence, and hers alone, might in future preserve him, it would have been cold, heartless, and ungenerous.

Olivia, who generally saw as her brother saw, viewed the letter and disappearance of Emily as he did, and, like him, because she loved her, saw nothing to condemn.

Elizabeth alone stood firm against the torrent of their feelings; she entered fully both into the purport of the letter, and the motives which dictated it—admired the propriety of her conduct—and grieved for the anguish with which she knew it was accompanied. The despair of her brother convinced her, that she had been mistaken in her idea of a division of his sentiments in favour of Miss Hazlewood, and, convinced that nothing was requisite to a perfect reconciliation between him and Emily, but mutual explanation, she earnestly sought her mother's permission to follow her to Riversdale. This however was denied with impetuous vehemence—"Would she debase her brother, by making him pursue with solicitations the woman who had deserted him—deserted him, too, the moment his fortune became entangled? Emily had no heart — even could she be recovered, she could never be the partner of a warm, generous soul, like his. There was one heart indeed worthy of him, and that he had repulsed, from love of the ungrateful Emily. She wondered why his sister should wish him to persevere in throwing away the exalted happiness which courted him, by the vain pursuit of—she must say—the far inferior happiness which was lost."

From Clanalvon and Olivia, Elizabeth met equal opposition. He said, and Olivia echoed his sentiments — "I would stoop to the dust for one hope of regaining her affection, but I know it would lessen me yet farther in her opinion—she would feel me presumptuously unconscious of my own unworthiness. I know her high sense of duty—her pious wish to recall a wanderer back to the paths of rectitude—her pity for the anguish of my disappointment—all would recall her to me if I sought her; but oh, Lizzy! lov ing her as I love, can I accept her on terms like these? even her heart, had I preserved it, could not confer happiness without her esteem. But Emily is too pure, too holy, too good, to love where she no longer esteems."

Elizabeth saw that if she could at any time carry her point, feelings were as yet too embittered to press it farther at present; but what she could do, she did—she wrote with the utmost tenderness to Mrs. Nugent, explaining Clanalvon's unabated attachment, his despair, and the self-humiliation which prevented his following or writing to Emily, and entreating her to return such an answer as would reconcile him to himself sufficiently to give him courage once more to seek that happiness, which, precious as it always was, was now, if possible, more dearly valued than ever; but desiring her, if she must give an answer unfavourable to her hopes, to defer it a few days, as in her brother's present state it would entirely overwhelm him.

This last, though a prudent, was an unfortunate precaution. Lady Clanalvon, on entering Elizabeth's apartment, had observed she was writing, and from the tears which stood in her eyes, conjectured to whom. She did not like entering into altercation with her on a subject on which they so widely differed, and on which, perhaps, conscience might whisper her, that lady Elizabeth's opinions were more just than her own, and hastily retired to deliberate in her own mind what was to be done; her first business was to determine that the letter should not go; the second, to furnish herself with arguments to reconcile her conscience to what she was resolved to do; and the third, to consider what was the means to stop the letter with least commotion in the family. On this head she reasoned, that if she peremptorily commanded Lizzy not to write, her pertinacity in adhering to what she felt a duty both to her brother and friend, would necessarily occasion great general disturbance, and great agitation to the feelings of her already too-much-afflicted boy; but as she, as a mother, had a right to command, and it was her daughter's duty to obey, she was fully authorized to produce the effect of this right, and this obedience, by means less liable to inconvenience; and concluded by demanding the letters from the servant entrusted to put them in the post-office, and taking from the parcel that addressed by lady Elizabeth to Mrs. Nugent, put it into the fire, without the knowledge of any individual of the family.

Day after day, Elizabeth in vain expected the desired answer; and, inferring from her own concluding paragraph, that when an answer did arrive, it would be one to blast all her hopes, she gradually ceased her expostulations with her brother on the subject, and only joined his other friends in efforts to remove the dreadful depression of his spirits.

One evening, about three weeks after the Nugents left town, Clanalvon, at the request of his family and Robert Howard, consented to accompany the latter to a concert, to which all had been invited, but which Elizabeth was prevented attending, by the necessity of remaining with her mother, who had perseveringly fretted herself into a nervous attack; for, with her usual exaggeration of feeling, she lamented Clanalvon's happiness as irretrievably destroyed, while, with her usual petulant irritability, she had prevented the only measure which could restore it.

It was the first time he had entered company since Emily was gone, and he felt himself almost in a dream. On her his thoughts were fixed—fancy had painted the idolized form before him, when a deep, though suppressed sigh, aroused him from his reverie—it was Cecilia Hazlewood, who, merely bowing without raising her eyes, turned another way. Clanalvon instinctively followed her, but, his mind too preoccupied to consider what he should say on this first meeting since her almost-avowal of attachment, he remained silent, and she did not look at or speak to him, though she could not command strength of mind to address another. Her cheek was deadly pale, her lips perceptibly quivered, and her downcast eyes were robbed of all their lustre.

Clanalvon felt his situation so awkward, as well as painful, that it was with joy he found his attention forcibly drawn away. —“ La! now, lord Clanalvon,” exclaimed Miss Maria Mansfield, touching his arm with her fan, “ it is so droll to see you standing there like a statue, that used to be so gay! You look half-dead—and so am I really quite dead, in earnest, almost, the heat is so dreadful; I am dying to get a breath of air on the staircase.”

Gladly Clanalvon seized her offered hand, and pressed his way with her through the crowd to the lobby. As he stood there, with his back to the descending stairs, endeavouring to keep up something like conversation, and Maria chiding him for his absence, she struck him with her fan, to rouse his attention; attempting playfully to recede from the weapon, he trod back, so as entirely to lose his footing, and fall to the bottom of the flight of stairs. He rose instantly unhurt, but not till Maria had filled the rooms with her shrieks—“ Lord Clanalvon is killed!”

It reached Cecilia's ears; and as he was beginning an apology to Miss Mansfield for his awkwardness, a young man, coming from the adjoining room, laughingly pushed him into it, saying, he did not know what happiness awaited him. As he entered, he heard Cecilia's voice, exclaiming, almost in shrieks—“ Where is he—where is he?” and he saw her flying through the dividing crowd, until she perceived him, when, with increased velocity, she sprung forward, and fainted in his arms.

Mrs. Hastings, Robert Howard, and a very few other good-natured persons, gathering round, attempted to shelter her from the observation of the company, but the moment of her recovery rendered all their precautions vain; with ungoverned vehemence she clung to him, called on his name, and, sinking her head on his shoulder, gave way to an hysterical burst of sobbing.

Hands with proffered salts, fans, and lavender-water, crowded round them. The young men laughed—"Well done, Miss Hazlewood"—"Clanalvon's a happy fellow," &c. &c. Some of the Misses tittered, and wondered any girl could be so forward—others, with good-natured curiosity, and some not without blushes, asked —"Was she engaged to him?" The matrons "hoped he would take the poor thing"—"would have died for shame, if it had happened to their daughters"—"nothing better could be expected from her sentimental airs." Miss Maria Mansfield declared, it was the funniest thing she ever saw in her life; and her mamma now perceived the arts that had lured him away from her Maria.

Clanalvon felt more alive to friendly

shame for her, than tenderness towards her; and perhaps embarrassment for the painful awkwardness of his own situation was almost as powerful as either; he was gently endeavouring to aid Mrs. Hastings in placing her on a sofa, when the observation—"Poor thing! she must hide herself in a nunnery, for she never can shew her face in the world again," drew from his eyes an indignant glance, and from his lips the words which sealed his fate—"She will next shew it as countess of Clanalvon."

The grateful pressure of her trembling hands—the thrill of strong emotion, which he felt vibrate through her whole frame, first struck back on his heart the import of this engagement. Eager to escape from her, from himself, from every thing, he hastily procured a chair, and having placed her in it, walked by her side, until it conveyed her home. To a mind as modest as hers naturally was, his whole manner would have told that the circumstance of the moment, and not the choice of his heart, had drawn forth the instantly-repented vow; but, as has been already observed, she cast her whole soul so entirely into any one feeling that interested her, that she had not a faculty at liberty for any other.

Persons who display more than ordinary sensibility, are frequently accused of affectation; its exercise is so irregular and so precarious, that it is not easy to believe the reality of its existence; but this irregularity is much more commonly occasioned by too much indulgence of the feelings, than by their absence or insufficiency. The feelings which relate to self are more near to each individual, than those which have reference to others; and those which relate to self are more alive to the present impulse which immediately acts on them, than to one even more powerful itself, but less present at the moment. Hence those who suffer the *first* impulse to be the *only one*, though they may be feeling, that is, sensitive characters, and may, in theory, be even benevolent, must, of necessity, be selfish, and insensible to many of the considerations which cannot escape the more widely-extended feelings of well-regulated sensibility.

It was long ere Clanalvon could calm his distracted feelings sufficiently to reflect on what had passed. He could scarcely receive the idea, that he was about to become the husband of another than Emily Nugent; so lately had he been her happy lover, beloved by her, and looking forward to the time when she would be his wife—so rapid had been the change, so indistinct, so unexpected, that he felt as if in a frightful dream.

Morning dawned without his perceiving it; he had not yet lain down, but was still endeavouring to recollect all, every word, and consider, was it indeed true? when the gentle tap of Olivia at his door, and her voice asking admission, awakened a new train of feeling—how should he inform his mother and sisters of the event? He told Olivia he could not yet let her in, desiring her to send his servant; he then wrote to Robert Howard, saying he could not meet his family until he came, to relate to them all that had passed the preceding evening.

Howard instantly obeyed the summons, and in a few minutes came to Clanalvon's room, to tell him that they were now acquainted with the circumstances, and to desire him to join them.

"With a smile on her lip, and a tear in her eye," lady Clanalvon seemed as if elated pride, sad recollection of her favourite Emily, triumph in the brilliant conquest of her son, and sorrow for the anguish which attended it, were at once agitating her breast. Elizabeth's placid brow spoke melancholy reflection, with which no sentiment of pleasure mingled; and tears, which seemed the natural accompaniment of her dejected countenance, were withheld by the depth of thought; but tears flowed abundantly from the bright eyes of Olivia, as throwing her arms around his neck, she exclaimed—"What a glorious sacrifice! dear, generous victim! my darling—darling brother!"

His mother also advanced, all the joy of her countenance checked by the expression of his, and drawing him to a seat, she kissed his forehead, saying—"Lost to what you considered your only happiness, you should rejoice, my love, in the power of blessing one so lovely, so devotedly attached." Again the smile of triumph played on her lip, as she recollected how much there was in that attachment to gratify maternal vanity.

"Such a display of attachment," said Howard, "from a girl so perfectly modest as Miss Hazlewood, must secure the heart of any man whose heart is disengaged."

"Whose heart is disengaged!" repeated Clanalvon, in a tone of agony.

"His is not disengaged," said Elizabeth, solemnly; "yet, as he has incautiously encouraged this attachment in Cecilia Hazlewood's breast, he owes her as much reparation as circumstances permit. If his feelings are in the smallest degree averse to her, marriage, instead of a reparation, would be added wrong."

"They are not averse to her," interrupted her mother, eagerly; "had his heart been free when he met her, she would have been the object of his choice."

"That may be," replied Elizabeth; "but neither his feelings nor hers are to be alone considered—he has yet no certainty that Emily has given him up."

The general voice now declared that this was but too certain.

"She has left him free," she continued, "from the bonds of honour—free to make a new choice, *even* though she should not be the object of it—we are not yet certain that it is not her dearest wish to be that object."

"I will go to her instantly!" exclaimed Clanalvon, starting up.

"Stop!" said his mother, and throwing her arm round his neck to detain him, she represented to him the necessity of taking some decided step with respect to Cecilia, that very day—she must not be left to the doubtful issue of a visit, which must occupy three days at least. Honour demanded, she said, that he should immediately act consistently with the engagement made last night, or acknowledge to her that it was only a kind fraud, to shield her from the shame she had brought on herself by the too-open display of her attachment to him.

"I will do so," he cried; "agonizing as such a declaration would be, I will make it, rather than relinquish one, the most distant hope of obtaining Emily."

He burst impetuously from the arms of his mother, but was detained by Elizabeth. The unanswered letter rushed upon her mind; that it had miscarried she could scarcely believe, as in their former residences in town, while Emily was at Riversdale, she had constantly corresponded with her, and no letter had ever missed, or met delay. If Emily was indeed lost to him, which she had strong reason to think, she knew that in Cecilia alone could he find any compensation; his honour too, which in Elizabeth's breast stood nearest to rectitude, was deeply compromised. Time would explain every thing; but time, on the present occasion, was not to be obtained. She knew not how to act, or what to think—circumstances so untoward had unsettled even her clear, unswerving mind, unbiassed as it was by passion or prejudice.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

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GOOD-NATURE,

AND

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GOOD-NATURE:

OR,

Sensibility:

AND OTHER TALES.

BY MISS AIMWELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

> Oh, Nature! wherefore, Nature, are we form'd
> One contradiction—the continual sport
> Of fighting pow'rs? Oh, wherefore hast thou sown
> Such war within us—such unequal conflict
> Between slow Reason and impetuous Passion?
> THOMSON.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.
1822.

CONTINUATION OF THE TALE OF

GOOD-NATURE.

As Emily Nugent stepped into the carriage which conveyed her from the scene of so many various feelings, her trembling steps could scarcely sustain her weight. The two nights of intense agitation she had endured had caused a degree of fever which flushed her cheek, and dimmed the lustre of her eyes. Illness had, as she said, made her view things in the worst light, yet reason told her, that Clanalvon, so long and devotedly attached, would not—could not prove untrue; and hope, founded on reason, sometimes glowed in her breast, and glanced its brightness from her eyes. She had another consolation to cheer the darkness of presentiment, which, in defiance of Reason's smiles, overpowered her; she knew that her actions had been guided by principle and duty, and from this felt confident that whatever their effect might prove, it must be for the best; and this holy confidence gradually became her only support.

At every post-town where they stopped, her beautiful features beamed with hope of there receiving a declaration of his eternal faith; for she knew his disposition too well to suppose that he would leave her in suspense until she reached Riversdale; in every breath she fancied his voice—in every tread his step.

The journey was usually completed, with ease, in three days; but Mrs. Nugent felt that the gay active Emily, who, when they last had made it, hastened their progress, was now no longer equal to the slightest exertion—it was the seventh day, when, exhausted by constant disappointment, and a preying fever, which it had caused, she entered the avenue of Riversdale, where every step brought to view some little mark of his affection.

Emily threw herself back in the carriage, to avoid a sight to which she felt unequal. The door was surrounded by the poor, among whom were many of Clanalvon's tenants, all anxious to catch the first glance of Emily's bright eyes, and the first tones of her gay harmonious voice.

" Ah, Heaven be wid yez, ladies! and I'm glad ye're come back among your own—sure there was no pleasure in life wid the two families away," echoed from every voice.

Emily could not raise her head.

" Miss Nugent is not quite well, my kind friends," said her aunt, bending to the window; and instantly, with the delicacy natural to the Irish character, the crowd dispersed, with murmurs of kind solicitude and sympathy, and hopes of seeing their " darlint young lady" to-morrow; but that morrow saw her deprived of reason, and almost of life; the nervous fever, caused by agitation of feelings, and loss of rest, which had been gaining rapid ground during their journey, was now arrived at the most alarming height; and as the wretched Mrs. Nugent hung over the feverish pillow of her idolized child, she almost feared that the fervent prayers she offered up for her restoration were cruelty towards her; that Emily should ever again be happy, was now, she thought, past all hope; all that she had clung to for earthly felicity was gone; duty had combined with inclination to fix for ever, without the possibility of change, the attachment once avowed; and so authorized, it had indeed become a part of Emily's existence; still she would, in her delirium, clasp her feeble hands, to pray for blessings on him who had reduced her to this situation; and often Mrs. Nugent wished that every proud resentful spirit could thus behold her, for hard indeed must have been the heart which could mark, without improvement, the fervour of her prayers, and the forgiving sweetness which prompted them; and often she joined her prayers to Emily's, that Clanalvon might be supported through the bitter affliction she knew he would feel, should Emily's danger come to his knowledge.

Every hour, for many days, Mrs. Nugent saw her become weaker and weaker, and thought she would ere long be called to resign her to that heaven for which she was so well prepared; but the friend of the friendless—the protectress of the oppressed, was not thus to perish—the prayers of her dependants were heard, and Emily was restored to life.

It was on the very day when she was pronounced out of danger, that Mrs. Nugent received a letter from lady Elizabeth Fitzmaurice; the melancholy which pervaded her style grieved her sincerely; but the contents of the letter were not now astonishing—every day had prepared Mrs. Nugent to hear that Clanalvon would shortly become the husband of Cecilia

Hazlewood; yet she feared, from the debilitated state of her niece, that the shock of hearing what she herself expected confirmed by certainty, would be more than she could bear, and she determined to conceal it, till her shattered nerves and trembling frame should gain some strength.

Hope was dead in the bosom of Emily, but resignation had replaced it, and shed its serene smiles over her pale features; and once more her eyes beamed the mild and holy lustre which in former afflictions had always replaced their sparkling brilliancy; she was beginning so far to recover her strength, that Mrs. Nugent thought she might shortly communicate to her the contents of Elizabeth's letter, when one day she entered the room where she was sitting, looking paler, but not less placid than usual; she held a newspaper in her hand, and pointing to one paragraph, she gave it to her aunt, and silently left the room; the paragraph ran thus—

"Married this morning, at St. George's church, by the lord bishop of ——, the right honourable the earl of Clanalvon, to Cecilia, only child and heiress of F. Hazlewood, Esq. of Woodpark, ——shire. The ceremony was private. The bridemaids were the right honourable lady Elizabeth Fitzmaurice, and the honourable Miss Howard. The noble bridegroom, with his lovely bride, and the dowager countess of Clanalvon, with the ladies Fitzmaurice, left town, immediately after the ceremony for the seat of J. Hastings, Esq., where, we understand, they propose remaining some weeks before they proceed to Clanalvon Castle. The magnificence of the equipages, and the elegance of the entertainment which followed the ceremony, have excited universal admiration."

Mrs. Nugent's colour had changed at every sentence as she read it, and tears filled her eyes, when, following her niece, she found her looking perfectly calm, tho' pale, reading her Bible.

She looked up, and a smile of heavenly expression beamed on her countenance, as she softly, but fervently said—"May they be happy, my dearest aunt! may they be happy, and make others so! In sight of Heaven I can truly say, that I hope no recollection of me may ever mar their mutual affection." She saw that her aunt looked on her with mournful tenderness, and throwing her arms around her, she added—"And I, my beloved aunt—I too will be happy; all *anxiety* has now left my mind, and you will see your darling smile again."

Mrs. Nugent burst into tears, and clasping her to her breast, she said—"Oh, do smile, my precious child!—do not smile so sadly, but cheer my heart with those dear looks of peace and joy."

"Joy!" repeated Emily, sighing deeply; "oh, aunt, do not yet speak of joy!—'tis too soon; but peace, I trust, will ever more reign in this lately-agitated breast. But let us leave this place—I cannot here feel at rest."

"Yes, let us go, my only treasure," said

Mrs. Nugent; "I live but for you and in you; but let us not go until your strength is more restored."

She found soon, however, that their further stay was more injurious to her than the fatigue of travelling could be. Here his image was recalled at every moment; here, if she attempted to amuse her mind by her harp or pianoforte, his animated countenance still recurred to her memory, beaming love and delight upon her; here, if she touched her pencil, his voice seemed to applaud every stroke; here, if she read, it was in the spot where he had read to her, or laid down the book to enter into conversation; his graceful form seemed here to attend her every step—if she entered the cottages of the poor, there his praise flowed from every tongue.

In change of scene alone, Mrs. Nugent soon perceived, could her health be re-established, and a delicacy of chest, which seemed to threaten her lungs, made her fix on Devonshire as the place of their retreat.

She mentioned this to Emily.—" It is indeed difficult to forget him," she replied, " or rather to cease to love one whose image, lately so dear, must ever be present to my mind; but duty now forbids me to love him as I did—he is Cecilia's husband now, and I trust one day to be able to hear constantly of their increasing happiness, and perhaps," she added, in a faltering tone, " to see them."

It was the day before their departure that Emily entered the cottage of Mrs. O'Beirne, one of Clanalvon's tenants, who was peculiarly attached to her, to take leave of her and her children.

The poor woman burst into tears, when she recollected that this was perhaps the last time she should ever see her dear young lady, and covering her face with her apron, she sobbed out—" And my lord to be bringing a stranger down upon us, and expecting us, I dare say, to be just the same way, bonfires and all, as if it was yourself, Miss Nugent! but that's what we can never be—she can never be liked and loved amongst us, as if he had the only one in the world that ever was fitted for him, and like himself, whatever made him take a liking to this one."

"Lady Clanalvon is a most sweet, amiable woman," replied Emily, tremulously, "and will, I am sure, be beloved for her own sake, as well as her lord's."

"She may be an angel of light," said Mrs. O'Beirne, sighing; "but sure, Miss Nugent, dear, you wouldn't expect us to love her like you, or forget you, and think it was she that done all that is done?"

"I hope," said Emily, holding out her hand, "I hope my kind friends will never forget me, but they can also love and respect their lady. I should indeed be grieved that your affection for me should prejudice you against my earliest friend."

"Oh! to be sure, ma'am, if she's your friend, and as my lord did choose her," replied Mrs. O'Beirne. "But, oh, Miss Nugent, dear! we can't think her like you, that was always kind, and good, and like an angel; the very childer, the creatures, says there's none such—and true for them, the poor things! sure they know you."

"You will find her, I trust, kind, and good, and like an angel," said Emily, in a voice almost inarticulate.

"Well, somehow, to tell you the plain truth, Miss Nugent—and why should I be hiding it from you?—none of us likes at all at all to be calling a stranger that way the young lady; and to have her coming about with him, too proud, no doubt, to look in our faces, and sending out her money with a servant to us, like beggars; and building the beautiful old castle with her new fagaries; and dashing off to look at Riversdale, to see the gardens, in that very coach, may be, and passing by the childer like dirt, with her fine English coachman; au! it's long before she'd find out their names, and have them as pat as if they were her own, like you, Miss Nugent, and my sweet young lord; for that's what he is, whatever come to him. Ah! then isn't it hard for us to like the thoughts of them days?"

Poor Mrs. O'Beirne, in her regret for losing Emily, had worked herself into the full conviction, that her successor must be proud and unfeeling; the very servants she represented to herself as beings of a species totally different from those who would have formed the household of Emily; and all Emily's persuasions to the contrary only confirmed her in her opinion more and more, in proportion as they interested her feelings for her who "had the sweetness and goodness to take the part of them that didn't desarve it from her."

"But I assure you," said Emily, earnestly, "that you have quite mistaken her character; you will find her as mild, as gentle, as charitable, as anxious for your affection, as the ladies Fitzmaurice."

"May be so, Miss, of course, if you say it," answered Mrs. O'Beirne, sighing; "but, oh, Miss Nugent!" she added, bursting into tears, "isn't it fit to break any body's heart, to see her there, and you gone off into foreign parts to die? and

I'm sure I'd rather that same, than to see her cocked up in the castle, receiving you for a visitor in your own house that was to be; but you'll come back with a lord as good as him. Well, well, I thought once there wasn't his like in the varsal world."

A glow of mingled feelings crimsoned the cheek of Emily; the sense of wounded pride combined with the softer emotions excited by the grateful tenderness of Mrs. O'Beirne to overpower her weakened spirits; and, leaning her face on her hands, she wept abundantly. When a little recovered, she said—"You have indeed been kind to me—I feel your affection; let me hear constantly of your welfare; and if I should never return again, believe me I shall never—never forget the gratitude I owe you all."

"Gratitude! Oh, Miss Nugent! is it you that owe gratitude to them, that wouldn't have gratitude enough to you, if they were to crawl on their knees to kiss the ground you walk upon—you that was all and every thing to us! Never return again! Oh, Miss Nugent, my angel! you that was always comforting us, don't go to break our hearts with that word!"

Emily arose.—"I shall see you to-morrow," she said; "but when the family come down, remember to tell lady Elizabeth and lady Olivia that I shall hope to hear from them immediately."

"And is there nothing for the ould lady, my dear, that doted on you more than any of them?"

"Oh, give the message to all the ladies!" said Emily. Then, after a thoughtful pause, she added, "and give my love to lady Clanalvon."

"Not the new one, I hope!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Beirne.

"No, the elder; and now farewell! But I shall see you to-morrow," said Emily, feeling herself unequal to the parting, and leaving the cottage as rapidly as her feeble limbs would permit, while large tear-drops chased each other down her pallid cheeks.

One of the many emotions which agitated her breast from this conversation, was the fear that Cecilia would not be loved—that her memory would be made painful to Clanalvon—and that they would not be happy. A strong presentiment took possession of her mind, that she would not live to return to Ireland; and, in the Christian spirit of full forgiveness, fearing the effect of Cecilia's excessive sensibility, should she ever discover how much she had injured her, and fancy that she had left the world at enmity with her, and also in a tender precaution for the present peace of Clanalvon, which she knew would be deeply wounded if Cecilia harboured any bitterness or irritation against her, she left for her the following note:—

"I hope it is needless to assure my ever dear friend, how anxiously and affectionately I feel interested in her happiness. Believe me, my dearest Cecilia, that though now separated, perhaps for ever, it is impossible for me ever to forget my early and strong attachment to you; and that wherever I may be, one of my truest pleasures must be to hear of your welfare. I am now recovering from a severe fit of illness, and am not strong enough for much writing; but wish to leave this as a proof, that in all circumstances you must be dear to me, and that I shall ever be your sincere and attached friend,

"EMILY NUGENT."

When Emily shewed this to Mrs. Nugent, she said she did not feel Cecilia worthy of so much affection.

"Oh, she does indeed deserve the tenderest affection!" replied Emily; "and now, my dearest aunt, it would be cruel in me not thus to prove it, for I grieve to say that his tenants are very unwilling to receive another than me as their lady; and indeed I wish to turn their kind hearts towards her, and to let her feel that Cecilia, though his wife, is still dear to me. Oh, aunt! now she is his wife, ought I not to seek to make her happy, and, thro' her, to make him so?"

It was certainly painful to Emily, to think that the man who had for so long lived but in her, should now forget her existence; yet from her heart she wished that no recollection of her might ever break in on the peace she hoped he would enjoy with his wife: peace was all she hoped he could attain, and all, in fact, she could sincerely wish him, for it was not in the nature of things that she should wish him to feel himself as happy with another as he might have been with her; she wished him to think of her with tenderness and regret; but from the vehemence of his feelings, she feared he would carry these sentiments to an excess of anguish, of which her affection for him could not endure the idea, and against this she wished to take every possible precaution.

The carriages were to be ready at ten

o'clock, and Emily arose early, to take a last view of Riversdale. As she entered the gardens, every plant seemed to breathe the name of her lover; it was he who once gave life to the scene—it was he who now cast the hue of death over all which, though it met her eyes in beauty, went with anguish to her heart. In the bower, whose rich foliage floated on the summer breeze, Clanalvon had talked to her of future plans of happiness; there she now sunk down, overpowered by weakness and sorrow. Memory drew tears from her eyes at every step, as she moved towards the house.—"Farewell!" she softly exclaimed, as she entered; "scene of my happiest and most miserable feelings, farewell!" A foreboding seized her mind that she ought to add, "for ever."

"Come, my darling child," said Mrs. Nugent, as she met her, "let us leave this once-happy spot." She felt it could only add to her sadness longer to delay, and supported her tottering steps to the carriage. It was surrounded by those of

Clanalvon's tenantry whose cottages bordered on Riversdale. All the women were in tears, some of them sobbing audibly, and many, even of the men, dashed away a tear from their rough cheeks; but the lamentations of all burst loudly forth, as Mrs. and Miss Nugent appeared.—"Och, you'll never see them again; there, look at them now—they're going off from us for ever; look at the mistress herself and Miss Nugent, sure they'll never come back, dear knows when," said the mothers to their infants. The hands of the universally-beloved aunt and niece were kissed and pressed by all who lined the way.

"Ah! haven't you a word for poor Peggy, Miss," said O'Beirne, "that couldn't come, but's like to break her heart at home, the creature?"

"Tell her," replied Emily, almost inarticulately, "that I feel truly grateful for her affection; and give my blessing to my little godchild."

"Heaven bless you, Miss! and it's she that'll be glad I seen the face of you once more, Miss Nugent!" said O'Beirne, as he hastened away, ashamed of the tears which Emily's look and manner forced from his eyes.

It was long before the mournful crowd would allow the carriage to proceed, for each had some little word to say, and each endeavoured to catch the last word and look of their benefactresses; and when they did at length disperse, relating a thousand anecdotes of Mrs. Nugent's benevolence, and the captivating sweetness of her Emily, the poor men insisted on unharnessing the horses, and drawing them out of their own avenue at least, since the ladies would not permit them to go farther.

As they thus moved on in mournful procession, Emily raised her eyes to the lofty towers of Clanalvon Castle; and as she looked and sighed farewell, she sunk back overpowered in the carriage. Mrs. Nugent kindly, but peremptorily, desired that there should be no more delays, as she felt her niece unequal to the agitation; and they were just driving off, when a servant of Mrs. Mansfield rode up, and put a letter into her hand.

Emily was for some time unable to read it; but when she was a little recovered, Mrs. Nugent advised her to do so, thinking it might amuse her.

"MY DEAR EMILY,

"Mamma, Jane, and I, are so sorry that we only returned from town yesterday, and cannot see you and dear Mrs. Nugent before you go to England. Which do you intend going to, Bath or Cheltenham? Cheltenham is very gay at present. I am sorry, however, that you are going just when we are likely to have so much amusement here with the wedding-parties. I must tell you the news, which I believe you left Dublin too soon to hear—I mean the way Cecilia Hazlewood got lord Clanalvon, for *you* and *I* know she did not come fairly by him; though I am sure I do not care, and I dare say neither do you. It was at a concert; and, in her queer, affected way, she was so wrapped up in the music, she would not speak or look at any one, not even lord Clanalvon; and he was flirting with me, as he always did, you know, when she would let him, and then he asked me to come out on the staircase with him; and I am sure, by his dolorous looks, he had something *very serious* to say, only so many came after us, on account of the heat: it was the better for him, however, for if he had said what he was going to say, I would certainly have refused him; but I thought I might as well hear him; and as I was jesting with him, to put him off, he was so diverted with what I said, for I happened to be in great spirits that night, that he forgot he was standing at the top of the stairs, and trod back, and tumbled from the top to the bottom. I never was so frightened in my life, so I screamed out, and then he jumped up, and was just saying every thing to me, when an odious man (I am sure there were so many of them, I forget which it was) dragged him into the drawing-room, laughing; and so I followed, to see what the fun was, and there was Cecilia running, and screaming, and pushing every body, you never saw any thing so droll, till she got at him, and asked him, was he alive? and put her arms round his neck, and fainted; and she looked so little and he so tall, and Mrs. Hastings so mad angry, trying to get her away from him, you would have died laughing if you had seen them; then when he went to put her into a sofa, she stuck to him worse than ever, and began to cry; and every one was laughing, and saying it was so indecent: so at last, to pacify her, he said he would marry her; but I thought it was only to prevent people laughing, until he made it good, and married her, as you have most likely heard from the girls.

"If the wedding had been as funny as the engagement, it would have been well worth going to: but the drollest thing of all is, that I heard from those who saw them, that he is the most attentive husband in the world, and quite satisfied with her, just as if he had chosen her himself, instead of her making him take her; and that she is grown quite pretty, and seems to adore him. I cannot say he looks well; but when I attacked him about it, he said it was the heat of the weather: indeed I do not think he will live long. Lady Clanalvon (not Cecilia), of course, will have elegant entertainments here. I had almost left out the queerest thing of all. When we went to congratulate them, we found the girls, and lady Olivia began to cry, and looked as pale as a ghost, and lady Lizzy, looking as doleful as herself, tried to prevent her; and we hear lady Olivia refused to be bridemaid, which vexed her mother greatly. Whatever their secret is, Robert Howard knows it, and I will get it out of him. You know I write to you as a friend. Mamma and Jane desire their

love; and, with best wishes for y
sure in your trip to England, I

"DEAR EMILY,

"Yours very affectionatel

"MARIA MAN

Giving the letter to her aunt
leaned against the side of the car
a considerable time in silence; a
without changing her posture, sh
"This action has not been entirel
tary; he did not intend to make
choice so very soon; delicacy, ho
ever-too-prompt good-nature, hur
forward to shelter Cecilia from the
to which her ungoverned feelings
her. The dear girls too——" She b
tears, and, partly exhausted by t
tion she had endured—partly soo
her present view of the subject, s
tinued under the languid dejectio
than the poignant sense of sufferi
this calm was not long to last.

One evening, as they entered th

of B——, where they purposed remaining the night, a retinue of carriages collected round the door of the hotel checked their progress.—"You can draw up in a moment, ladies," said a waiter, coming forward; "or it is but a step to the door—my lord Clanalvon's carriages will be off directly."

"Lord Clanalvon!" repeated Mrs. Nugent, in a low voice, while Emily, drawing her veil closely over her face, leaned back to conceal herself.

"Yes, ma'am," said the waiter, in answer to Mrs. Nugent's exclamation; "lord and lady Clanalvon, and the old lady Clanalvon, and the lady Fitzmaurices, have been here this four days; my lady was so fatigued travelling in the heat, ma'am, so they are going in the cool of the evening."

While her aunt was listening to the man, Emily turned away her head, to avoid his eyes; and as her vacant glance turned on the opposite side, Clanalvon passed, but not the ardent, light-hearted, animated Clanalvon of former days; the look of desolation which reigned in his pale features shocked her to the heart; he seemed too absorbed to perceive passing objects, and, without noticing it, passed the chariot.

"Where is lady Clanalvon?" she heard him say, in a voice, oh! so different from that in which he often had called upon her name!

"Here, my love," said the soft voice of Cecilia.

Emily perceived that she was near, and yet more closely concealed her agitated countenance.

"Then all is ready," said Clanalvon; "my mother and Olivia are in the barouche. Lizzy, love, you will come with us in the phæton."

Elizabeth answered in a low voice; Clanalvon handed her and Cecilia into the carriage, and the brilliant equipages drove off.

When they were past all danger of her being known, Mrs. Nugent looked back;

he was wrapping a shawl around his bride. Mrs. Nugent turned away her eyes, and a movement of anger agitated her breast.

Emily looked at her, but did not speak, and silently followed the waiter up stairs.

"This is the apartment his lordship's family occupied—it is the best," said the man, as he ushered them into a sitting-room, "and can be set to rights in a moment, ladies," he added, leaving them.

"My feelings have been tried—severely tried," said Emily, after a pause; "but now, thank Heaven! I am myself again. I am a weak, feeble creature; but I trust not in my own strength, and I shall bear all."

Mrs. Nugent thought that, as she raised her eyes to heaven, there was something celestial in her beauty.

The apartments had been recently occupied; some books lay on the table, and the writing-materials seemed to have been just used. The talkative waiter re-entered; Emily had unconsciously taken up a pen from the writing-desk by which she sat.

"Oh, Miss," said the man, "the earl was just writing there. His lordship was copying something out of a book. I will put the things out of your way in an instant, ma'am;" and as he removed them, he continued, "such a generous gentleman as the earl seldom visits this town, or any other, I believe, ma'am. I never saw such a gentleman, and such a sweet young lady. Dear me! it is no wonder they should be so happy together; and by what I can understand, ma'am, there is no end to their riches. The tea will be with you in an instant, ladies," and he left the room.

Emily raised her soft eyes.—"Oh, aunt," she said, "I can never see them—I can never be their mutual friend, as once I fondly hoped; but, oh, this heart still weakly clings to the dear, fatal idea of past times. I dare not witness the felicity which, at a distance, I hope I may enjoy."

At an early hour Emily retired to the chamber prepared for them; her aunt did not go up with her, fearing she might enter into conversation; but Catherine Murphy awaited her there. Oh, Miss Nugent!" she exclaimed, "think of that dear good gentleman. They were telling it below stairs; even in his short stay here, it would surprise you all the good he has done. A poor smith, ma'am, that was ruined, he has set him up again, and given him ten guineas to begin with, and twenty other things like that. Oh, ma'am, were not you sorry to see him looking so bad?"

"I should grieve to hear he was ill, Catherine; but has he been so?"

Catherine approached her young mistress more closely, and, in a low voice, she said—"And, ma'am, whatever is the reason, I believe he is in great trouble."

Emily's cheek glowed with the brightness with which health had once painted it, as she turned an inquiring glance on the girl.

"The chambermaid, ma'am, the other night, went into his dressing-room to settle something, and he was sobbing like a child, ready to go into fits, she told me, and some little paper, or something, she could not exactly see what, kissing it, and seeming like to break his heart; and when he saw her, ma'am, he started up quite wild, and put it into his breast; he said he thought the door was bolted; so then he asked for my lady, and by-and-by went down. Ah, Miss Nugent! is it not a pity now, such an angel of a young creature, as my mother used to say, with goodness written on his very face——"

"Leave me now, Catherine," said Emily faintly.

Catherine went; but as she reached the door, she turned back, and blushingly asked—"And don't you think, ma'am, that he has settled all for my poor father and mother by this time?"

"I am certain he has, Catherine," replied Emily, smiling kindly, though sadly; "believe me, I have not forgotten them."

"Well, I will leave you now, ma'am," said the girl; "and do try to sleep, Miss Nugent, dear."

Emily promised she would try, but far was sleep from her heavy eyes; every mention of his name served to add some new pang to her feelings towards him. That the object of his tears and caresses was some relic of his love for her, was beyond all question; indeed, a doubt of it never occurred to her mind, for even when he deserted her, she felt, with a mixture of satisfaction and pain, that he still loved and esteemed her; but she had not known that his constancy of attachment would amount to a degree to make him wretched—and wretched she now saw he was. The hasty glance of his countenance had shewed her that all its life and brilliancy were extinguished; and Catherine's description of his agony, in hanging over what she believed a relic of her, filled her generous bosom with affliction, to which she could not apply the balm of patience, as she did to her own more individual sorrows.

A sleepless night followed this day of violent agitation; but she lay still and silent, not to grieve her fond aunt by the idea that she was unwell; however, she anxiously requested that they might early recommence their journey, for feelings of agonizing tenderness, which she could not check, rose in her breast, as her eyes every where met the objects his had lately rested on. All her feelings were, without disguise, expressed to Mrs. Nugent, as they drove from the fatal spot which had excited them.

A new delay to their arrival in their peaceful dwelling, arose in the illness of Emily, which detained them several days on the road, after they had crossed the sea, and made part of the journey to Devonshire; but at length they reached the retired spot, where Mrs. Nugent hoped to find rest for both, and where Emily, with mournful pleasure, felt it probable she should sink to the calm repose of an eternal rest. Yet should she die, what could replace her to her beloved and ever-tender aunt? On this she would not suffer her mind to rest, when she felt her health declining; but when recovery opened to her view, she thought on blessing the age of that beloved parent, and became reconciled to remain in a world where *joy* no longer lived for her; for though the poignancy of affliction was in some measure subdued by resignation, and her spirits became even and cheerful, the buoyant spring of youthful gaiety seemed broken for ever.

All of loveliness she had ever possessed remained in undiminished perfection, tho' much of the lustre which had surrounded that loveliness had lost its splendour; her looks and voice used to diffuse cheerfulness wherever she appeared; interesting, endearing softness was now their more peculiar character. The holy hope of eternal blessedness, which beamed on her perfect features—the soft lustre of her eyes—the pure, transparent snow of her cheek—the brilliant hectic glow which sometimes enlivened it—the delicacy of her form, combined to give her the appearance of an inhabitant of that heaven where her thoughts already rested.

Blessings followed her steps; and had she known Clanalvon happy, blessings might have again filled her own heart, by nature prone to happiness, and by resignation not impatient under the want of it. In the placid sweetness of her smile and manner, Mrs. Nugent fondly foresaw years of remaining comfort in her beloved child; but the shock she had received had deeply wounded her constitution; and though her physicians saw no decided symptoms of danger, they were far from considering her in a safe state.

Thus let us leave her, and return to her unhappy lover: vain it were to attempt to paint his feelings, on the dreadful day when he received the hand of Cecilia; he knew not himself how to name half the wild thoughts which thronged in desperate succession through his breast; but this was uppermost—Emily loved him not; she had deserted him, and the too-fond, too-sensitive Cecilia had become the wife of one who did not love her. He dared not then think on the determinations he afterwards formed for her happiness; he endeavoured not to think of the future, and to the past he dared not to look back.

A few days sufficiently calmed his feelings to enable him to review the last action; but with this degree of calmness came an absolute despair of his own prospects—but one consolation remained to him—he resolved to be the only sufferer. The very consciousness that Cecilia's attachment was not returned, gave a peculiar tenderness to his manner towards her, and her bright smiles assured him that she was deceived. She was now caressed and happy, and a thousand charms and graces, unknown before, appeared to grow in the warm atmosphere of tenderness by which she was once more surrounded: but to Clanalvon's heart every attraction in his wife struck a new pang; it reminded him of the adored object of his love—of her in forgetfulness of whom alone he could ever hope for happiness in another. Every moment brought the fair form of Emily, in fancy, before his eyes—on her his thoughts for ever turned—but never since his marriage had he heard or breathed her name.

It was on the memorable evening, at the hotel in B——, that this spell was broken, and that the transient bliss of Cecilia received its first check. His mother was occupied at a table near which he sat, lost in painful reverie on his return to Clanalvon Castle; but at length, fearing that his long silence would be observed, and perhaps give pain to his wife, he endeavoured to throw off his abstraction, and, with a forced effort at cheerfulness, asked his mother what was her employment? at the same time drawing from her hand the paper she was examining.

It was the design of an illuminated arch, formerly sketched for the preparations for his marriage with Emily, in the centre of which his name and hers were to have been cyphered in coloured lamps—an erasure was now visible, on which the letter C. for Cecilia, was substituted for E.

He started, as if a serpent had stung him, sprung from his seat, regardless of Cecilia, whose head rested on his shoulder, tore the paper to atoms, and striking his forehead in agony, rushed from the room, and shut himself into that appointed for his dressing-room. His agony was great and incontrollable; all the feelings which he had so painfully struggled to conceal and to repress, overwhelmed him with all the force of novelty, and that peculiar sentiment of despair which attends on sorrows unrevealed and unpartaken; all the fond ideas which had attended the preparations, of which his mother had so imprudently revived the remembrance, took possession of his heart, and Emily appeared no longer as the betrothed wife who had forsaken him, for errors which partial love might have viewed with more indulgent eyes, but as the betrothed wife, such as she once was, smiling at the prospect of mutual happiness. He drew from his bosom the last letter he had received from her; he gazed on it—he pressed the precious characters, traced by her hand, to his lips—"And oh, Cecilia!" he exclaimed, "may I not preserve the relics of her love, of her coldness, almost equally dear, since both are equally relics of her? may I not once more read those lines which destroyed my every hope of happiness, without a breach of my faith and gratitude to you?"

He read; but, oh! how different now appeared every expression in the letter! He saw that he was beloved by Emily—that he had madly deceived himself, in following the blind impulse of jealous feeling, and that now perhaps every anguished emotion of his breast equally throbbed in hers.—"But no," he said, "she can command her feelings—she can bend to the dictates of reason and duty, while I am only governed by that sickly unworthy sensibility; but duty does not—cannot call on me to forget her. No, Emily, first, best of human beings, in ceasing to adore thy sacred memory, I must forget the virtues which I caught from thee! But, holy creature! I will think on thee as a blissful vision, which once might have blessed me, and is now faded to its native skies."

Clanalvon had uttered these words almost aloud; and now floods of tears fell from his eyes, and wet the paper which he held. The spirit of Emily seemed near him; he felt as if at that moment she thought on him with pity.

It can hardly be accounted for, but it is certain, that where a separation has been occasioned by unfounded doubts of the affection of one of the parties, though it seems natural for reason to consider a discovery of the mistake, when too late for remedy, as an aggravation of the evil, yet love so fondly clings to the idea of return, that affliction is rather soothed than exasperated by it; thus it was with Clanalvon—his sorrow was increased, but it assumed a milder character; his tears flowed more abundantly than before, but the convulsive sobs which shook his frame had ceased.

His mind at length reverted to the alarm which his abrupt behaviour must have occasioned his wife; he regarded her not as a cause of his misfortune, but as a suffering partner in it, for he sufficiently esteemed her worth, and admired her attractions, to feel that a heart, engrossed by another, was unworthy of hers, which he was sensible she had unreservedly bestowed on him; and he was endeavouring to recover his composure, in order to return to her, when he was surprised by the chambermaid, who afterwards related to Catherine Murphy what she had witnessed of his distress.

Entering the sitting-room, agitated by a thousand tumultuous feelings, he found Cecilia sleeping on a sofa, some traces of tears still visible on her face; and without speaking, he seated himself beside her. Her amazed inquiry, on his hasty departure, of "what was the matter?" was answered only by a burst of tears from Olivia, who had caught a glimpse of the paper in her brother's hand.

Lady Clanalvon, with a groan between sorrow and impatience, gathered up the papers, and replaced them in the box from which she had taken them; and Elizabeth, after colouring crimson deep, returned to the window where she had been standing, and called on Cecilia to admire the beauty of the setting sun.

Cecilia burst into tears, saying they had some secret which was to be kept from her, and that she well knew Clanalvon loved both his mother and sisters more than her. The assurances of lady Clanalvon and her daughters, that she was very dear to him, were unavailing; she lay down on the sofa, and throwing her head on Elizabeth's bosom, she wept herself to sleep; time therefore passed unconsciously to her, or his continued absence would have given her much more cause for sorrow; and when she awakened, and found him leaning over her, she smiled again, and soon closed her memory against this interruption of her fairy dream of bliss. The deep dejection of his pale countenance however gave her fresh anxiety.—"My love," she said, "let us go on to our delightful home. You do not look well, dearest!"

He did not answer. It must be done sooner or later, and he might as well go now as at any future period, since his feelings towards Emily could never change.

"Let us go," she continued, smiling, "and there enjoy the delicious calm of domestic happiness—our only care to win on the affections of the poor around, and to relieve their wants—Thomson's sweet description realized. Oh, what magic perfection of happiness I have fancied there!"

"And you, my sweet Cecilia, will be so beloved!" exclaimed lady Clanalvon; "they are a grateful, simple, unsophisticated people, who can only love true worth and gentleness. I do fondly wish for the time when I shall see my sweet Cecilia the idol of all around her—her soft voice pouring balm into the breast of affliction."

Clanalvon and Olivia both started at the description; while Elizabeth cast a cautionary and beseeching glance at each, to check the farther expression of a feeling in which she too deeply participated, not to be awake to every indication of it in others.

" If your fatigue is quite past, my love, we can go on to-morrow," said Clanalvon, in a suffocated voice, and left the room.

Elizabeth saw, with deep concern, the probability that the consolation which her brother might derive from seeing Cecilia made happy by his means, must be destroyed by the sudden bursts of agony, of which she must, sooner or later, discover the true cause. This danger lady Clanalvon was, inadvertently, perpetually increasing; grateful to Cecilia for her devoted attachment to Clanalvon, her vanity flattered by the conspicuous display she had made of it, she doted on, and admired her with enthusiasm; and piqued that Emily should have been led, even by the purest motives of honour and delicacy, to hurt the feelings of her idolized boy, irritated by Olivia's prejudice against her who had, in some measure, wounded both for his sake, and fearful lest the remembrance of Emily's very superior attractions should render him unhappy, she endeavoured to hold up Cecilia, and in her perpetual praises of her, frequently touched on the very points in which Emily peculiarly excelled, thus awakening the very feelings she sought to obliterate. In her contemplations too of Cecilia's reception at Clanalvon Castle, she often touched on the same ideas that had been presented for that of Emily.

It may be generally observed, that in almost all the concerns of human life, the interference of temper tends to produce the very evils the apprehension of which had excited its irritation.

As Mrs. Nugent's chariot was covered in its travelling-case, it was not recognized by any of the Clanalvon party; and the servant who rode with it, with an instinctive feeling of delicacy on behalf of his young lady, placed himself on the other side, to conceal his livery from observation.

The next day they were to reach Clanalvon Castle, and for the first few miles fresh smiles beamed at every moment on the animated countenance of the young countess of Clanalvon; but when she found that those bright smiles were not answered, in the joyless, agitated eyes of her adored husband, they faded from her own.—"You are not well," she fondly said; "you are not well. Oh, let us not go farther! You are fatigued, my beloved; you look very—very ill."

Clanalvon consented; well he felt that his feelings could not be alleviated by the passage of time; yet gladly did he seize his wife's proposal to delay, for one day, the sight of the residence endeared to him by so many now-agonizing remembrances. But ten miles separated him from it. Oh, how a few months before he would have flown over those miles to catch the first glance of her whose bright eyes smiled no more for him! but now he trembled at the idea of reaching those scenes of his lost happiness. Morning however came, and determined him to proceed, for he felt, that if he longer delayed their arrival at the home she longed to attain, Cecilia must suspect the sad truth.

In bright descriptions from the mother, of the day when she came a blushing bride to Clanalvon Castle, and in expectations of the joy and honour with which the present fair countess would be received, the time in the carriage was spent, while Cecilia eagerly listened, and turned to inspire with her own delight the mind of her lord.

He did force a smile. At this moment every thought but those of his wife must be dispersed, or at once the bright vision of happiness, formed by her warm enthusiastic fancy, must have died before the wild and dreadful agony which would have overpowered him, had he not, with the strongest and most violent exertions, restrained his feelings.

A servant had gone, on the preceding evening, to announce the arrival of their lord and lady, and invite an assembly of the principal tenants in the great hall; and, as they drove up the finely-wooded avenue, Cecilia smiled to see them collected to receive her in front of the magnificent and ancient castle. No customary shout of joy saluted the carriage as it stopped, though, when Clanalvon alighted, there was a general burst of—"Heaven bless him!" and all pressed forward, anxious to gaze on him more nearly. He then led forward his bride, and the blessings and welcomes were evidently rather those of etiquette than the spontaneous effusions of the heart.

Clanalvon felt this too, and, happily for them both, that good-nature which, though sometimes weakly misled, was of the purest and noblest species, for a moment turned his thoughts from every other feeling to those of pity and tenderness on her behalf. These sentiments were painfully increased, as he heard the acclamations with which his mother and sisters were hailed.

As they passed through the hall, the bows and curtsies of the servants, and those of the tenantry assembled there, confirmed the impression made on her mind the moment she quitted the carriage, that the people of Clanalvon were sorry their young lord was married; and this she remarked to him as they entered the sitting-room—" I suppose," she added, " it is because your mother and sisters are so much loved."

Another idea had glanced through her mind, but she instantly banished it, to catch at that less painful which she expreſsed.

The exclamation of—" Och, she's no more like her!" which had more than once met her ear, as she passed through the hall, might bear either interpretation. So keenly had it stung her, that while she wept and sobbed in her dressing-room with her mother-in-law and Elizabeth, she never mentioned it. The only comfort they could offer was the assurance that she had mistaken for dislike to her the distance natural to a stranger.—" But when you return from town next summer, my Cecilia," said lady Clanalvon, " you will find with what rapture you will be received."

The moment they had left the room to disencumber Cecilia of her travelling-dress, the long-restrained tears of Olivia burst forth; her brother caught the infection, and the free vent he then gave to the anguish of his heart, enabled him to get through the evening with more composure than his sisters had expected; and Cecilia, who tenaciously clung to the visions of joy she had fabricated, tried to attribute his dejection to vexation for the annoyance she had sustained.

Elizabeth, saying she was too much fatigued for conversation, engaged him in chess, while she desired Cecilia to try if she liked the musical instruments in the apartment.

She however left it to Olivia to touch them, while she leaned silently over her, sighing that she had cause to sigh, now she was within the magic circle of her long-desired home.

The thoughts of Elizabeth and Olivia were principally occupied in considering how the Nugents would receive the visit which they had agreed to make them before Cecilia's hour of rising. Clanalvon remembered the last evening Emily had spent in the room where they sat, and the last time she had sung to the harp over which Cecilia now hung; and his mother smiled in the prospect of happiness, which she acknowledged to herself was not yet arrived.

At an early hour the following morning, the sisters set out on their walk to Riversdale. Autumn had now commenced, and the fresh breeze which shook the branches brought down showers of dying leaves.

“ It was just this time twelvemonth, Lizzy,” said Olivia, “ that Clanalvon got that dreadful fall. I remember, just so these trees dropped their leaves when Emily and I used to walk here talking of him.”

“ Yes,” replied Elizabeth, “ it was that fatal time which formed those engagements we once thought so happy.”

“ I do not—cannot love Cecilia,” said Olivia; “ I never see her without thinking of the injury she has done my brother and Emily. Lizzy, say what you will, she has acted ill and ungenerously by her.”

“ No,” said Elizabeth, “ Cecilia is very weak, and suffers herself, like Clanalvon, to be governed by the impulse of the moment; she first found a pleasure in his society, which she would not deny herself; that pleasure grew into attachment —an attachment she could not conquer; but she never voluntarily betrayed it, nor ever wished, I am convinced, to rival Emily; and when he proposed for her, she can scarcely be blamed for accepting him."

"Oh, no!" said Olivia; "but still I do dislike her; I feel of her what Charles once said of some other person—that she has only the beauty of sensibility—a selfish kind of refinement. Now, Lizzy, is she not always thinking of herself and her feelings?"

"You are unjust, Olivia," answered her sister; "it is not long since you were the most ardent advocate of this extreme sensibility; and I fear it is Cecilia rather than Cecilia's faults you dislike; for you never blamed the same kind of errors in Clanalvon—his natural superiority prevented their having an equally-injurious effect on him, but still they existed, and deserved equal blame. I speak of them as past, for never did I see more praiseworthy self-command than he has shewn on this unhappy journey, and more unhappy arrival."

"But when I was such an admirer of

this sort of sensibility," said Olivia, "I had not seen the contrast between Emily and Cecilia. Cecilia's sensibility ever turns on herself; Emily's makes her feel more quickly for every one, and gives her a true perception of justice in every case, but does not govern her."

Elizabeth replied—"Sensibility is not a governing power—indeed it can hardly be considered in any light a power or faculty of the mind—it is but a quickness of susceptibility. When it gives life and energy to the feelings, in the practice of all that principle, in the coolest hours of reflection, could dictate, it forms an Emily Nugent; when it quickens feelings too much inclined to look towards self, it forms a Cecilia, soft and endearing, but incapable of self-denial; when it hurries the feelings on to follow the first impulse, without adverting to the eternal rule of right, or pausing to weigh consequences, it forms a Clanalvon, frank, generous, noble-minded, but unstable, ever losing sight of distant objects in that which more immediately presses on his feelings. He has sacrificed Emily to his perception of Cecilia's partiality for him; I do not mean in the final instance, but in the attentions which raised her love to such enthusiasm; and now, with every generous effort to the contrary, I fear he is in danger of sacrificing Cecilia to his sense of that wrong. Thus you see no one can have too much sensibility or quickness of feeling—it is only that with some it is ill-turned."

Olivia's countenance brightened, and in an animated voice she exclaimed—"Oh, Lizzy, I perfectly understand you; and surely then, where sensibility has once been ill-directed — directed towards the wild pursuit of pleasure, may not the character, enlivened by its influence, when its faults are checked by principle, be very—very superior to those whose slower feelings have never led them either to error or repentance?"

"Certainly," replied Elizabeth, smiling, as she regarded the delighted countenance of her sister, "certainly, the more animated character must be more animated in virtue as well as in error; but this strong energy in pursuit of its object, whatever that object be (such a character, in short, Olivia, as Robert Howard's), if ill-directed, will be more wicked; if well-directed, more useful and more virtuous than——" She paused for an example.

"Than that of his quiet sister," added Olivia, laughing, "who is as good and as stupid as any one can be."

"But where there is a deficiency of principle, there is reason to fear that sensibility will never be well directed," said Elizabeth.

"But if he should acquire steady principle?" exclaimed Olivia, earnestly.

"If he should," replied her sister, seriously, "he will become worthy of Olivia. But remember, my sweet love, it is but an if."

"But as to Cecilia," said Olivia, after a pause—"surely, Lizzy, you would not either have me so far forget Emily as to love her as much as if she had not forced herself into her place, or else act a double part, by appearing fonder of her than I really am?"

"Not precisely either," Lizzy answered; "she acted very blameably, and you cannot love her as if she had become connected with us in a manner you fully approved; but you should not forget, that by that connexion she has placed much of her happiness in our hands; and though we did not seek the trust, we ought not to abuse it. It is also hardly possible for us to divest ourselves of some little degree of disinclination towards a person who has occasioned so much unhappiness; but that disinclination ought not to be suffered to grow into injustice, by influencing our judgment against her actions and temper; on the contrary, it ought to lead us to judge her indulgently, under the apprehension that we are liable to do otherwise. As to acting a double part, in seeming to love her, consider, dearest Olivia, how much of affliction seems suspended over a creature so delicate, so susceptible, and your kind heart will find no duplicity in shewing her the utmost tenderness and sisterly regard."

As she spoke they reached the gate of Riversdale, and lady Elizabeth called the name of the gatekeeper.

She admitted them with great joy, requesting them to walk into her little cottage.

"When we are coming back, we shall be glad to do so," said Olivia; "but we have not seen the ladies for some months."

"The ladies!" repeated the woman; "then you don't know, ma'am, that our ladies are gone?"

"No—where?" asked both sisters.

"Into Devonshire, wherever that is, my lady, for Miss Nugent's health. Oh, ladies! I thought you were bringing some news of them."

"We did not know they were gone,"

exclaimed Olivia. "How could Emily so neglect us?"

"Bless you, my lady!" replied the gatekeeper, "it was many a long day since Miss Emily could sit down to write. Sure, my lady, it was only the very day afore she went, she was able to crawl down as far as O'Beirne's, ready to faint, you'd think, at every step, and that isn't a stone's throw, a body may say, if you go by the white gate there among the trees; and O'Beirne's people was always great favourites with her, you know, lady Elizabeth. Didn't she stand for little Fanny there?"

"And she was ill?"

"Ill, my lady! it's well we ever got a sight of her till she was in her grave. A cold, I believe she got, coming down from Dublin; and the mistress herself—bless you, ma'am! she never looked no better nor a ghost, after Miss Nugent's sickness."

"How were they when they went?" inquired Elizabeth, anxiously.

"Oh, ma'am, I don't know rightly what to say—she did not look like herself at all, but prettier, my sweet angel, I thought, than ever she looked afore; but pale, ma'am, and fit to break a body's heart just to look at her—she that used to look so pleasant and so happy now, just like lady Olivia. Oh, ladies! it's a hard case to have had her, and to lose them now."

"Was her state dangerous?" asked Elizabeth, in a low voice, as if afraid of the answer to her question.

"Ah! how should I know, my lady? is it a poor ignorant creature like me, that wouldn't know if one of my own childer was dying, but as the mistress and that darlint child would tell me?"

"What part of Devonshire are they in?" asked Olivia.

The woman gave her the paper on which Mrs. Nugent had written their address.

As the sisters left the cottage, every object, before almost unnoticed, recalled, with painful tenderness, the dear inhabitants of Riversdale. It was the hand of Emily, assisted by Clanalvon, had trained the roses and woodbine which now grew in wild luxuriance around the cottage; it was the benevolence of Mrs. Nugent and her niece had raised the cottage for its present occupants; it was the taste of Emily had directed the plantation which surrounded the domain; it was there she had waved a laughing farewell when they last went to town, where she was immediately to follow them. She still, in the fond deceit of memory, seemed to give life, by her smile, to the shades of the once-joyous Riversdale. But she was gone—gone, dying and unhappy! those smiles were faded, perhaps for ever—that hand perhaps lay now cold in the grave!

The sisters continued their walk homewards for some time in silence; but they seemed, by tacit agreement, to hasten from the scene of so much past pleasure.

When they arrived within sight of the castle, Olivia, turning to her sister, said—

"*Now*, Lizzy, can you blame me if I hate Cecilia, instead of merely disliking her?"

"You would now be more blameable than before," replied Elizabeth. "Grieved to the heart as we must both be for our darling Emily, must we not feel for the almost-certain misery this will cause between poor Clanalvon and his wife? his feelings will, I fear, betray themselves; and, for pity's sake, Olivia, love, do not, by betraying yours, increase Cecilia's misery, and consequently his! Let us try, by our tenderness, to draw her attention from him; let us gently break it to him, and mention it to Cecilia when he is not present."

"Poor unhappy Cecilia!" exclaimed Olivia; "I do pity her: but she has not yet discovered that he loves Emily instead of her; and I will try not to increase his agitation by shewing what I must feel."

"Do try, for poor Cecilia's sake, and yet more for that of our precious Clanalvon," said Elizabeth, as they entered the castle hall.

They endeavoured, on entering the breakfast-parlour, to speak cheerfully of the fineness of the day; but Clanalvon, who suspected where they had been, cast a hasty and agitated glance towards them, not unperceived by Cecilia, who, starting up, asked eagerly what was the matter?

"Nothing, my love," answered lady Clanalvon, "but that they have walked too far—they both look fatigued."

"Yes, there is something," exclaimed Clanalvon, "Olivia looks so agitated, and Lizzy so pale. You have heard something?"

"Nothing of any consequence," said Elizabeth, with as much calmness as she could command; "only we were both disappointed to find that the Nugents have, at least for a time, left Riversdale."

Clanalvon returned to the table, and stooped over a newspaper.

Cecilia followed him.—"I am very, very sorry," she said, "to find that the Nugents are not here. I had hoped constantly to enjoy the delightful society of my darling Emily."

"Miss Nugent is a general favourite, I believe," said Clanalvon, with a strong effort to suppress his emotion.

"Indeed she must be the favourite of all who know her," exclaimed Cecilia, energetically; "there is a magic captivation in her manner, a loveliness in her perfect form and face. She never returned my ardent affection. But you look ill, my love. Oh, you have got that nasty headache again!" she added, fondly kissing his burning forehead.

"I have indeed, but the air will recover me," he answered; "thank you, sweet Cecilia, for your watchful anxiety;" and kindly pressing her hand, he was leaving her, but she stopped him, by saying—"I will go with you—you promised to take me over the place to-day. Olivia, love, will you come with us?"

"No, thank you, Cecilia," said Olivia, with the coldness usual to her manner towards her sister-in-law; but recollecting the affliction which probably awaited her, she added, in a kind tone—"or yes, if you like it, I shall be very glad."

"But no, Cecilia, my love," said Clanalvon, "you are too delicate to walk before breakfast—I will walk with you afterwards."

"He seems far from well," observed Cecilia, when he was gone. "Were his spirits always so uneven?"

"Oh, no," cried lady Clanalvon, always unguarded when her vanity, either for herself or her children, was touched, "he was the very child of joy—we were the happiest family on earth—all animation and innocent vivacity—his very smile, his joyful voice, banished sorrow and vexation from every heart; but this morning," she added, recollecting herself, "he has a headache; and you should not fear, my love, for his general spirits."

"He is never gay or
said Cecilia; "and
aches!—I a
Clan

his appearance was far from removing his wife's anxiety. He had endeavoured to stifle the feelings he could not overcome; but thinking of Emily, it was impossible to cease to lament her.

Cecilia, with his mother, accompanied him over the grounds, and in animated terms expressed her admiration of the taste with which they were laid out.

When she had returned to the castle, Clanalvon, wishing to avoid the conversation there, continued his walk. As he passed near the pretty cottage of Mrs. O'Beirne, he saw her standing at the door, and approached to speak to her.

"Will you please to step in, my lord?" said the young woman, curtseying, and tears filling her eyes, partly drawn by his altered looks, and partly by the recollections connected with him.

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length she said—"Ah, then, my lord, did you hear any thing since from Mrs. Nugent, yourself or the ladies?"

"No—no," replied Clanalvon, in a smothered voice.

"Indeed! then it would be a glad word to hear how she's going on at all," said Mrs. O'Beirne. "My own heart beats every new person I see, thinking they'll be bringing me some news—that she's gone for ever, or that maybe she's getting quite well again, and coming home. I declare, my lord, myself doesn't know what I'm like, when I think o' the last time I seen that child."

"Gone for ever! How—what do you mean?" exclaimed Clanalvon.

"Oh, true for you!" replied Mrs. O'Beirne, "no one can tell how things may turn out; but anyhow, them that seen her goen off couldn't expect to see her returning back again; and they tell me, my lord, she was worse again the day she left it; for it was the day afore that I seen her—she walked down, my blessed angel, (and maybe that's what she is in heaven this day, and sees and hears every word we're speaking here), she walked down to see me every step o' the way." Mrs. O'Beirne paused for a reply, but receiving none, save from the upraised eyes of her auditor, she continued her story—"Here was I, my lord, sitting over by the fire there, and one of the childer sleeping on my lap—well, it was a dreadful hot day; indeed I was thinking of past times, and how things was altered, and thinking of herself and her aunt, and her sickness, and all. Mrs. Nugent never held up her head, or looked natural at all at all after that sickness; and thinking this way, and rocking the child betimes on my knee, when little Peggy there she was standing at the door, she cries out—'Oh, mother,' says she, 'who do you think is coming but Miss Emly herself?'—'Ah, don't be telling lies, child!' says I, not thinking but it was in fun she said it. But I got up, and true for her, there she was. But, dear me, will I ever forget the sight I got of her that day, all trembling like a leaf, and her feet just failing under her, and the sweet delicate colour, like a rose, she'd get when she'd be moved any way, you know, my lord? and moved enough my angel was that day, sure enough—all gone—sorrow difference between the cheek and the forehead. Well, in she came, like to faint, and she fell down in that very spot where you're sitting; and says she——Oh! I can't tell you all she said. I'd never remember half the elegant words that was in it; but I know she was praising the young countess, and bidding me to love her, and making out as if she was just such another as herself, and her friend, and twenty things; anyhow her cheeks got as rosy, and her eyes as alive, in a minute. But never will I forget the sweet pitiful smile of her—many a day after she went, I used to be thinking of it night and day—the sorrowful look of her. Well, I b'leive no one could ever have a bad thought in their head when they were afore her. Now she looks so sweet, and so quiet somehow, a body'd be ashamed now like, as if one was in the chapel. So that was the last time I ever seen my angel, or ever expect to do again."

Clanalvon had not even recollection to wish to control or conceal his frantic agony.—"What was her illness?" he at length inquired.

"Sorrow know, know I," replied Mrs. O'Beirne. "Oh! a cold I suppose she got; for I'm sure it's not for the likes of me to be meddling with gentlemen's and ladies' concerns, let alone noblemen. At any rate, you don't look the better of it yourself, the more's the pity; but she looked like one that wasn't long for this world—and a sorrowful world it is, and not fit for her, at least as she found it, to say the honest truth, my lord. Oh! it was nothing but a cold she got, I suppose. I'm not the person to know; there are others that could tell me, I don't doubt; anyhow, it was a pitiful sight to see that beautiful, lovely creature just sinking into her grave, as if she had the cares of fifty on her."

Clanalvon's breast heaved with convulsive sobs.

Mrs. O'Beirne looked surprised; and no wonder for her, as she afterwards told her husband, to see him taking on so, after leaving her, and going to another that way.—"I beg your pardon, my lord," she said; "I'm sorry I told you. But how could I think? Anyhow, it is enough to make any one cry, to see such a young creature as that was, looking the very moral of a corp; sure, it would touch the heart of a Turk to remember what a chearful smiling creature she was; and for that matter yourself too. Well, what must be must be. Isn't it queer, my lord, the way what's pleasantest one time goes to one's heart another?"

Clanalvon waved his head.—"Indeed—indeed it is."

"Ah, then, my lord," continued Mrs. O'Beirne, "do you remember the day she stood for little Fanny, and the child in her beautiful white arms, and you standing by her—and the sweet, serious look of her at the minister—and her pretty brown hair? ah, my lord, haven't you her before your eyes, standing over there?"

Alas! the fair form was seldom absent from his mind, and well he remembered the peculiar delight with which he had regarded it that day. He had drawn Emily's godchild towards him, and his tears fell on her head, when the door opened, and Cecilia entered.

The cottage of Mrs. O'Beirne so much resembled the idea of a poetic cottage, that the romantic fancy of Cecilia was so captivated with it, as to prevent her at first observing the agonized emotion of her husband; withdrawing, as if to look at something in a part of the cottage more shaded from the light, he said—"My dear Cecilia, I must recommend to your particular regard the family of one of our worthiest tenants."

A kind smile illumined the countenance of the young countess of Clanalvon, as she gave her hand to the mother, and stooped to kiss the baby.

"Get out of my lady's way: how dare you come near my lady?" said Mrs. O'Beirne to the children, who had rested in peace while only their lord was present. "Look up, Fanny, and thank her ladyship for her goodness. Would your ladyship condescend to take a seat?" she added, seeming afraid to offer one.

Cecilia admired the beauty of the children, the clear turf fire, and the neatness of the little room.

"Yes, my lady," answered the mother, "much obliged to your ladyship: and it's to my lord there, and to one far away, we owe it that we've a bit to put in their mouths."

Cecilia turned a pleased glance on her husband, and stooping over the child, who was gazing at her watch, she inquired its name.

"She's called Fanny Emily, my lady,

after Mrs. Nugent, and Miss Nugent, that's her godmother, my lady," replied the mother.

"And you call her Emily?" said Cecilia. "I love the name, for the sake of the universally-beloved Miss Nugent."

The mother answered, that they generally called her Fanny, and Cecilia continued.—"All the people here seem in comfortable circumstances; I believe all the men are well employed?"

"Yes, indeed, my lady, and the women too," said Mrs. O'Beirne; "they haven't had a day's pleasure this year but one, that the steward gave them out of respect; and a sorrowful day that was, my lady, to all the country round."

Cecilia inquired—"Why?"

"Why, my lady, the only day they had at all was the day that they went, all of us, in a body to Riversdale, there to see the ladies off, and to see the last of them, and the men to draw the carriage away; sure they wanted to draw them out of the county, that's two Irish miles, changing from one to another, my lady; but the ladies wouldn't let them at all at all go so far; so they only drew the carriage to the end of the avenue. There wasn't a dry eye for miles about. Myself I couldn't go, for I thought I'd only drop down on the spot, and be making her cry. But they tell me she sobbed like a child, and the mistress the same; and no wonder, for they were downright idolized. Indeed, my lady, it was a sore sight to see the great strong men, the tears rolling down their cheeks like rain; but there was something so sweet in the ladies, ma'am, they could not help but cry; and sure enough it was more like a funeral than any thing else. I beg your pardon, my lady, for running on so; but when any of us gets to talk of them, there's no end to our tongue."

"I am glad," said Cecilia, "to see so kind a spirit, since I hope in time to gain an interest in it."

This observation was answered only by

a curtsey, and—"Humbly thank your ladyship."

Cecilia felt hurt and mortified; her object was rather to be loved and admired as herself than as her ladyship; her husband too was silent, or wholly engaged with the child, and took no pains to conciliate towards her the affection of this favourite tenant.

The feelings of Clanalvon, as he walked home, were equally those of the bitterest grief and most poignant self-reproach: his Emily dying, had it been of casual illness, in the midst of happiness, was in itself sufficient to overwhelm him with affliction; but that she should die heart-broken, from the effects of that attachment which might have rendered him the happiest of men!—there was frenzy in the thought. In the wild despair of his feelings, he felt as if tenderness towards his wife was an insult to her memory; and wholly absorbed in his own feelings, which, however, he had now acquired the habit of in some measure concealing, he suffered her to walk unheeded by his side.

For some moments she continued to speak of the objects of rural peace and felicity which had charmed her fancy; but then observing the agony which shook his frame—recollecting his abstraction in the cottage, and perceiving the marks of recent bitter weeping on his countenance, she became silent and thoughtful. She knew that he had once been engaged to Emily, but had imagined that when her coldness to him led her to break the engagement, that his attachment, which she fancied had proceeded rather from esteem and the habit of affection than from natural union of heart, had vanished; but now a dreadful pang of jealousy seized her feelings, and a truth rushed on her mind, which disabled her from questioning him on the subject of his emotion. She entered Clanalvon Castle, trembling and almost fainting; but her husband, wrapped in his own dreadful reflections, perceived it not, and when he had left her at home, he again hastened into the grounds.

Cecilia attempted to reach her own apartment, but her trembling limbs refused to carry her there, and lifeless, motionless, she sunk on the stairs.

At the moment, Olivia, passing to the drawing-room, saw her, and her shriek called her mother and sister to Cecilia's aid; she was carried to her own room, and at length their care and tenderness restored her to her senses.—"Fly to your brother, Olivia; do not let him be alarmed," cried lady Clanalvon, the moment Cecilia unclosed her languid eyes.

Olivia hastened to seek him. His frenzied air, and the tears which still wet his cheek, proved to her that fatigue alone had not caused the illness of Cecilia. Unnoticed by him, she approached, and called his name; but putting her hand into his, she said—"Dearest Clanalvon, do not be frightened, but poor Cecilia has been very ill; she has over-fatigued herself, mamma supposes."

He turned his eyes on her face, as if he did not understand her.

"Come in," added she; "Cecilia will think you very unkind if you do not go to her. She is better now; but indeed she was very, very ill, Clanalvon."

"Cecilia ill! My wife ill!" exclaimed Clanalvon.

"Yes, very ill. She fainted on the stairs; but she is better," said Olivia, drawing him homeward as she spoke.

"Am I not a second Cain?" he said. "Olivia, I have sent Emily Nugent dying from her home; and now poor Cecilia! Oh, my Olivia, am I not unworthy of the breath I draw? But she loves me. Yes, Olivia, I will go to her; she still thinks herself happy—she may still be saved; but Emily, she too loved me, Olivia, and——But Cecilia is my wife, and I forbear."

They reached the castle, and he instantly flew to the apartment of his wife. Cecilia was recovered, but her mental agitation was still visible on her face. He embraced her, and employed every endearment of his manner to again deceive her; deception was now his duty, and Cecilia soon smiled again under its influence; but she could only smile—could only be happy, in forgetting the yet-unaccounted-for scene in the cottage; every incident which recalled it to her memory clouded her expressive countenance, and it was enough present to her mind to make her dread, in his presence, every allusion to Emily, whose note to her she carefully concealed.

They had not heard from Charles Montague since the letter which announced his having attained to within two days of the end of his journey. A few days after their arrival at Clanalvon Castle, as the brother and sisters were walking in the shrubbery, they turned at the sound of a man's footsteps. It was Charles, the dear Charles, who clasped Elizabeth to his breast, and seemed unable at once to express his transport at sight of her and of his other cousins. He desired to come to his aunt.

"Oh, no, Charles!" exclaimed Olivia, who felt as if joy could not enter Clanalvon Castle, since another than Emily had become its mistress.

Lizzy and her brother seconded her request, wishing, before he met their mother and Cecilia, to give him the information which they feared their letters had failed of conveying, as, by his prompt return, it was probable he had missed them.

He answered their inquiries respecting himself, by informing them that his uncle had died before he reached Petersburgh, leaving a will, by which he bequeathed to him the whole of his very large property, part of which consisted in an estate in Ireland, purchased for him by his agent, in the intention of consigning it to Charles, in case he should prove enough of natural affection towards him to induce him to accept his invitation to Russia. Charles concluded by saying, affectionately—

"Dear Clanalvon need not now be afraid of his debts, but must receive the hand of Emily Nugent the same day I receive my Lizzy's."

Clanalvon was in an instant almost out of sight.

"Tell him all, Olivia," said Elizabeth, springing from the encircling arm of Charles, to follow her brother.

"What is all this, Olivia? Is Emily dead?" exclaimed Charles.

"Not dead, but dying," replied she; "dying in England; and Clanalvon—— You did not receive our letters?"

"I did not receive any letters," said Charles; "but it is impossible that he is married."

"He is indeed married—married to that——"

"To Miss Hazlewood?" interrupted her cousin. "I often dreaded it."

"Oh, your fears of a growing attachment on *his* part were groundless," said Olivia. "He thought that Emily was lost to him, and in the most noble man-her sacrificed himself;" she then related the outline of the circumstances, and added, "he is indeed a glorious victim to generosity, and it would break your very heart, Charles, to see his wretchedness."

"I scarcely knew Miss Hazlewood," said Charles; "but Emily Nugent's successor must be very, very amiable to make her be beloved. Poor Clanalvon is indeed altered! from the first moment his appearance struck me."

"Even you, Charles," said Olivia, "would be provoked if you saw how Lizzy loves her; and mamma caresses her, just as she used to caress my darling Emily. Oh, you would pity him, if you knew how Clanalvon's spirits and health are gone!—and, oh, you would admire him, if you saw with what patient forbearance he endures all Cecilia's caprices, and with what fortitude he struggles with his feelings for her sake, while his whole heart is devoted to Emily!"

Charles Montague had intimately known Emily, and, long in the habit of observing her character with pleasure, as the future wife of his friend, had grown to love her almost as well as his cousin Olivia; and now, when lady Clanalvon proudly presented to him her lovely daughter-in-law, Elizabeth marked the agitated colour rise and fall on his cheek. He had not yet heard how truly pitiable was the envied fate of the young countess of Clanalvon; and his manner, as he kissed her offered cheek, was cold and disaffectionate.

Cecilia felt it; but wishing to blind herself to the unkindness of her husband's cousin and favourite friend, she afterwards asked Olivia—"Was Mr. Montague's manner in general so distant to strangers?"

"I am not well acquainted with Charles's manner to strangers," replied Olivia; "but I know that to those he loves he is the kindest of all friends."

"I have heard him so highly praised," said Cecilia, "and I know that Clanalvon is so much attached to him, that even were he not to be the husband of my dear Elizabeth, I should wish to conciliate his regard. I am very courageous," she added, smiling; "I shall have much difficulty in gaining the affection, even of the tenants, and yet I not only hope to obtain it, but venture to think I may yet become a friend of your cousin. But indeed, Olivia, love, in my former slight acquaintance with Mr. Montague, I remarked a peculiar sweetness in his manner; I thought then that I could almost trace a family likeness to your brother."

"I never thought Charles and Clanalvon like," said Olivia, anxious to turn the subject. "From infancy Charles and Lizzy resembled each other. I recollect in all our little plays they were companions—their tastes were always the same —my brother's and mine; and when we began to grow up, Lizzy and Charles always liked the same kind of books—Clanalvon and I; they were fonder of descriptions of countries, and we delighted in reading of heroes sacrificing themselves for their country, and that sort of thing. They were always together; it has since reminded me of the love of Redmond and Matilda in Rokeby; and they still continue each other's favourite companions."

"And who were yours and your brother's?" asked Cecilia.

"In infancy we were each the favourite playfellow of the other," said Olivia.

"But since infancy?" repeated Cecilia.

"Of course you are now his favourite companion; and he is still mine, unless, perhaps, I now find nearly equal pleasure in other society; but when we were children, I avowedly loved Clanalvon better than any thing on earth; and indeed I believe I do so still."

"I was not *always* his favourite companion, Olivia," said Cecilia. "Did your taste and his grow up so much in unison?"

"Of course they separated a little," replied Olivia, blushing. "I am five years younger than him, and he required something more in conversation than I possess. I am not as well informed as he is, neither have I as fine a taste for the lighter and more elegant accomplishments. You know

I have no genius, for instance, for music, of which he is so passionately fond."

"And who did he find of superior talents or attainments, my sweet Olivia? for I do not know the person," said Cecilia.

Olivia blushed deeply, and tears filled her eyes as she recollected the beloved and injured friend, who had possessed every power of charming; but not wishing to utter her name in presence of Clanalvon's wife, she went to the pianoforte, and asked Cecilia to sing a song which she named.

It was not one she liked; and taking up a music-book, she offered, if Olivia wished, to sing that she pointed to.

"No, no!" cried Olivia, snatching the book from her hand, "I could not bear to hear that song; it was a favourite of my darling, lost Emily; and now she is gone, I will never hear it in this house at least."

"It was a song of my beloved Emily Nugent's; I taught her that song in our happy childhood at Woodpark," said Cecilia, bursting into tears, and retiring to the window.

Olivia followed her, and silently threw her arm round her waist, at a loss what to say, yet desirous of offering some conciliation.

While they thus stood, Clanalvon entered the room. He came to inform his wife of an arrangement that had taken place respecting the celebration of Elizabeth's marriage; but the sight of her tears, and of the book over which he had so often hung, while turning the leaves for Emily, put to flight every idea, save those connected with her and with Cecilia. Elizabeth had represented to him the absolute necessity of concealing his feelings, and he came determined that they should never more be visible to her; but when he saw the sorrow with which she leaned over Emily's music-book, the instant idea which occurred to him was, that Olivia, in her own feelings on seeing it, had betrayed to her the state of his.

Neither Cecilia or Olivia perceived his entrance, and he remained standing near them, afraid to make it known to the former, until she raised her eyes, and the smile with which she looked at him, convinced him that anger did not agitate her bosom.

"Why these tears, my dear Cecilia?" he kindly asked, taking her hand.

"This book," she replied, "belonging to the friend of my earliest childhood, reminded me of Woodpark, and all the recollections connected with it."

As she spoke, her tears flowed afresh, and she hastily left the room.

Clanalvon remained on the spot where she had left him, and in a few minutes his mind rapidly surveyed the whole of his extraordinary situation. The fond affection of his wife for Emily was peculiarly touching to his generous nature; he felt a more tender interest in Cecilia for her attachment to the idol of his love, and he resolved again that nothing should ever tempt him to betray feelings which could wound her.—" No, holy, sainted Emily!" he inwardly exclaimed, " thy blessed memory shall never make her who knows to love thee unhappy. No, sacred creature! thy dear remembrance, embalmed in tears of tenderness, shall be unstained by any other's; thy name shall never be heard but with the soft emotions of regret; thou shalt be uninjuring, as thou art injured; but still, in the inmost recesses of this bleeding heart, that image so adored may be preserved. Yes, I will love thee still; unworthy as I am, I still will love thee; and I can love Cecilia—I can cherish her tender spirit as it deserves; for, oh, my Emily! no other love can interfere with that with which thou art enshrined within my soul."

It was determined that Elizabeth Fitzmaurice should be married at Clanalvon Castle, as soon as the licence could be procured, as it was necessary for Montague immediately to take possession of his new estate, and he refused to go until she accompanied him as his wife.

Lady Clanalvon, with peculiar joy, prepared for the marriage, as by it she saw one of her daughters happily settled, without losing the society of her favourite.

Olivia's joy in the happiness of her sister and cousin was scarcely clouded by her grief at their departure, as she promised herself many long and pleasurable visits to them, as well as from them.

Cecilia was glad to see Elizabeth happy, for she really loved her, and was not sorry at the diminution of the family at the castle, as she felt a constant jealousy of Clanalvon's preferable affection, not only for his mother and sisters, but for his cousin Charles.

Clanalvon, alone, with agony, which, though unexpressed, was visible to his affectionate sister, saw the universal joy—the smile of placid and perfect happiness which reigned on the features of Montague, might have been his; a blush of lovelier hue than that which overspread the dimpled cheek of Elizabeth, he had once hoped to see on that of Emily as his bride. Often, as he gazed on them with sad recollection of blasted hopes, the anguish of his heart would appear on his soul-speaking face; and as often Cecilia would reproach him for his extreme attachment to Elizabeth and Charles, saying that she would be the most blessed of women, could she see such feelings for her—could she see such affliction at the idea of losing her—such earnest anxiety for her happiness.

At these moments, Clanalvon, who would willingly have bared his breast to the cannon's ball, shrunk trembling from her eyes; his feelings, in themselves not of a nature to be vanquished, at every moment met fresh excitement from the passing scenes.

Elizabeth felt for his sufferings, the more, as she perceived the sedulous care with which he sought to conceal them; her own happiness did not make her less tenderly sensitive to the sorrows of others; and Charles remarked, with delighted affection, though painful sympathy, every cloud which shaded the joy of her countenance. It was his wish that his favourite Olivia might go with them, and Elizabeth had more reasons than the mere delight of her society for urging his request; but Olivia resolutely refused to deprive her idolized brother at once of the only two who could enter into and alleviate his feelings; and her mother wondered that Lizzy's pleasure in the company of her happy sister should make her so cruelly neglectful of Clanalvon.

Lizzy's motive for wishing to have her with her was not selfish; no selfish consideration could have induced her, under such circumstances, to wish to appropriate to herself any source of enjoyment which might mitigate the severity of her brother's fate; but she was under deep anxiety about Olivia's future prospects. She saw that she was cherishing an attachment to Robert Howard, which, as it seemed rather the result of his devoted and enthusiastic love for her than of qualities which rendered him the natural choice of her heart and her judgment, she thought separation would in a little time obliterate; and this she wished, because, though his talents were showy, his manners attractive, and his disposition such as, under proper regulation, might have been all that was amiable, yet he was totally devoid of principle and steadiness; besides which, she had well-founded hopes of another union, much more likely to be productive of happiness to Olivia, to which her prepossession in Robert's favour was the only obstacle.

Lord O'Donnell, a young nobleman, who possessed in an eminent degree all that Robert had, and all that he wanted, had expressed to Charles Montague such warm admiration of Olivia, as he saw a very little encouragement from her would ripen into love; Olivia too respected his worth and admired his talents; and Elizabeth often thought she had seen her turn with reluctance from his interesting and intelligent conversation, to save Robert Howard from a jealous pang. If her love could be directed towards him, it was evident that it would be that of full, approving choice—a love that could honour as well as cherish him; while that for Robert could be nothing more than childish liking, strengthened by habits of intimacy.

To break through these habits, and leave her mind the liberty of a free choice, whether it would lead her to lord O'Donnell or back to Howard, had long been the earnest wish of Elizabeth and Clanalvon, and both had often forcibly represented to their mother, and as often succeeded in convincing her reason of the propriety of checking the familiarity with which Howard was almost domesticated in the family; but the reason of lady Clanalvon was never as powerful as her feelings, and these being too much governed by vanity, rendered it insupportable to her, that a lover of Olivia's should be allowed to drop off by degrees, without a proposal and formal dismissal; and to bring about this proposal and dismissal, she sometimes encouraged him more than ever, knowing that a declaration was only delayed by the apprehension he had entertained, since his connexion with lord Belville, of being violently opposed by Clanalvon.

Clanalvon, Charles, and Elizabeth, all joined in earnest endeavours to prevail with Olivia to accompany the two latter; but when they found her so determined to resist their entreaties, and saw that if she went, her thoughts would still remain stationary, they ceased, agreeing, that as far as lay in Clanalvon's power, he should counteract his mother's encouragement to Howard, and that he should, by gentle degrees, lead lord O'Donnell into his place.

Charles and Elizabeth went, anxious for the feelings of their darling sister, and yet more anxious for the fate of their yet dearer brother.

The family now consisted only of lord and lady Clanalvon, the mother, and lady Olivia.

An ancient castle, surrounded by tenants, resembling the vassals of the feudal barons, a family large enough in itself to form a society, perfect liberty in every respect, music and painting to amuse the hours not devoted to reading or social intercourse, books, and those who could enjoy them with her, Cecilia had ever fancied the highest state of happiness to which human nature could attain.

These were all now her own; she had grasped what she imagined the pinnacle of bliss—and was she happy? The sighs which her bosom heaved, the tears which unconsciously stole down her cheek, answered the question; and yet at times her beaming countenance spoke her the very child of joy.

It was at the moments when these enjoyments drove from her remembrance the bitter feelings which wet her pillow with tears. She felt that she was not beloved; life had been since childhood utterly without happiness for her; and when the peculiar sweetness of lord Clanalvon's appearance had attached her to him, and when she was about to become his wife, she did not suffer herself to pause on the idea, that the tenderness which enchanted her might be nothing more than the effect of pity for her unhappiness. The fairy visions of felicity, which gave her such pleasure while she formed them, were too delightful to break; she had not sufficient strength of mind to deprive herself by reflection of their enchantment. Once, and but once before her marriage, she recollected that Emily Nugent had once been his destined wife, and that her own enthusiastic admiration of him had first been excited by his devoted attachment to her friend; but then fancy, the charming deceiver, to whose illusions she constantly yielded her better reason, taught her that it had been but the influence of habitual affection which attached him to her, and the idea that it was only this was too sweet to be given up; she therefore did not venture to examine it.

Perhaps this voluntary blindness is, of all others, the most fertile source of moral error; for there are comparatively few who can commit a crime, with its full atrocity glaring in the face of conscience. Cecilia had too much rectitude of mind, and too much habitual principle, to have indulged herself in the endearing attentions which were calculated to seduce the affections of the beloved lover of her friend, had she felt the full force of what she was doing; but she had that facility of self-delusion, that deficiency of courage to investigate painful truth, that always gave her wishes power over her reason; she would not act against the clear dictates of truth; but she could evade its force.

For the first few weeks of her marriage, all the fancied enjoyments of her life seemed realized, and if one pang of disappointment, if the coldness of Olivia, or the agony which at times convulsed the features of her husband, checked the delights of her situation, again she willingly blinded herself, and imagined that once they reached their home, all care would be at an end.

Sad was her disappointment, on her first reception at Clanalvon Castle; for fancy had painted this one of the most brilliant moments of her life. Every day brought some new damp to her felicity; she had fondly fancied herself the darling of his family and his tenantry, and she saw herself only considered as the rival of the adored Emily Nugent; but no jealous prejudice against this universal idol took possession of her breast.

Emily was too pure for envy to find one fault to fasten upon; she was too mild, too unenvying, for a possibility of dislike; she was too humble in her opinion of herself, too just, or rather indulgent, in her judgment of others, for a mind of any generosity to cast a blame on her; and even when Cecilia felt most unhappy, from the preference of her husband's family for Emily, she could not avoid joining with them in the strongest esteem and admiration for her. She did not wish to think of her; but when she did, it was with the sentiments she deserved. But it was *only* with his tenants and family she discerned this preference; had she suffered herself to see it in him, it would have annihilated every possibility of happiness; and she blinded herself to it as sedulously, though not as effectually, as before her marriage. It sometimes darted across her soul, with a pang of poignant agony, and then her mind never rested until she had placed the circumstance which gave birth to the idea in another point of view, fastening all the blame, of whatever gave her pain, on lady Clanalvon or Olivia; feeling herself not beloved as she wished to be loved by him, she fancied that his deference for his mother's opinion, and his tenderness for her and his sister, were the causes that intervened. She often said, that he should not have married while he loved his mother and sisters more than he could love a wife; and by degrees this jealousy grew to such an excess, that whatever was proposed by them, even the choice of a book, a walk, or a drive, was sure to meet her opposition. Clanalvon's concurrence with their taste always called forth tears and reproaches; if he agreed with hers, he gained nothing by it but thanks almost as reproachful, "that he had *for once* preferred her gratification to theirs;" and if he was totally neutral, "she could not find pleasure in any thing, because he never seemed to participate in it." That she was an "isolated being," was her constant complaint, and sometimes with justice, though never so but through her own fault. If he forgot his sorrows in the animated interest with which he read aloud some beautiful poem or tale, she was listless and inattentive, complained of a headache, by way of apology, and sometimes criticised the work, as if rather teazed than amused by it; if the book was laid aside, and music, chess, or any other amusement proposed, it was still the same; nothing could engage her; and without once wishing it, she always contrived to throw a damp on the enjoyments of others. Company was tried a few times, but the exertion of common civility towards them, the slight trouble of additional attention to her toilet, shortly seemed to overpower and fatigue her; she consequently always appeared to disadvantage; and Clanalvon saw his guests received in a manner which almost made them doubt their welcome.

Is it to be wondered at that his mind recurred to a comparison between her and Emily Nugent? In the gloomy hours of evening, spent in silence, or, still worse, in forced conversation, he thought on how those hours might have glided, enlivened by genius, taste, sensibility, and a susceptibility of enjoyment, which, flowing from a temper naturally cheerful, required no outward circumstances to give play to its ever-ready smile. He had seen Emily ill, but never seen her incapable of rewarding attention by looks of pleasure; he had seen her a prey to the keenest anxiety, during his own long illness, but never had seen her a burden to others. The feelings of Emily neither required nor loved excitement, but seemed as a vital principle to all around her. Cecilia, on the contrary, loved excitement, and sunk into lassitude without it; she was formed, not to communicate, but to receive life from others.

This difference in their characters Clanalvon saw, and felt that however lovely Cecilia might be in the moments of sunshine, all the powers of her mind drooped when a cloud overshadowed her; and as his memory retraced the happiness he had once known, he often thought how true was the feeling of Young—

> "And I was—*was* most blest,
> Gay title of the deepest misery!"

The society of lord O'Donnell might have enlivened the domestic circle, but he soon deserted it. He sincerely loved and esteemed Clanalvon, and saw that he was wretched; he admired Emily, and both from common report, and their manners to each other, had gathered that she was once the destined wife of Clanalvon, and that her present absence and illness were generally attributed to his desertion of her; he was not precisely acquainted with the manner in which the change had been effected, but yet saw and suspected enough to prejudice his mind against Cecilia, even more than she deserved, as appearances led him to believe that she had supplanted her friend by deliberate treachery. His manners towards her were, in consequence, so coldly and distantly polite, that Cecilia, whose passion was to be a first object with every one, contracted the strongest aversion for him. Eager to attribute her husband's want of the ardent attachment she looked for, to any cause rather than that which too often obtruded itself on her mind, she grew jealous of what she conceived to be lord O'Donnell's influence, which she suspected he sometimes used to prejudice him against her.

Had this been true, prudence should have induced her to endeavour to conciliate the esteem and regard of her husband's friend; but instead of this, she always took care to give him such a reception as marked her dislike of his visits, and during their continuance she usually withdrew to a distant part of the room, where, reclining on a sofa, she wrapped her large shawl closely around her, and seemed, in her looks and attitude, to envelop herself from all participation in the society present.

In vain Clanalvon expostulated with her, representing the injury she was doing his sister; but all he could say produced the very opposite effect, only raising in her mind a terror of the man she so much disliked becoming a member of the family. Unwilling as he was to exert the authority of a husband, when he was conscious he could not feel the tenderness of one, he went so far as to say, he *insisted* on her receiving lord O'Donnell with civility at least, if not with friendliness.

This word, so new to her ear, produced hysterics and agonized reproaches, that he tyrannized over her wherever her inclinations opposed those of any of his family, and that in this instance he cruelly sacrificed her feelings of self-respect to the interest of Olivia, in compelling her to degrade herself, by seeking to conciliate the favour of a man who had insulted her by marked aversion.

Lord O'Donnell, finding his visits painful to himself, and ineffectual as to his object, since the uneasiness they caused must rather prejudice Olivia against him, gradually withdrew them entirely; but as he resided in the neighbourhood, Clanalvon was frequently with him; this caused new tears and new reproaches; but experience had so far corrected the weak and facile good-nature of his character, that though he would have yielded any thing that merely concerned himself to the wishes of Cecilia, he held firmly to what he felt right, in a point where the real interests of one object of his care and protection were set in opposition to the temporary gratification of another. He was not however equally steady in another point connected with the same object.

Olivia, unable to find enjoyment in her joyless companions, seemed almost sinking into the lassitude of Cecilia; but whenever Robert Howard came, she found again one who could sympathize with her in every respect. He read to her, and still his opinions coincided with hers; he praised Emily Nugent; he was never tired in hearing her praises of her brother; he loved all she loved, and she felt that she was dearer to him than any earthly being.

Naturally affectionate, warm-hearted, generous, enthusiastic, had his candid mind been rightly directed, he might have been all that the husband of Olivia Fitzmaurice ought to be. He hated the dissipation into which he had fallen, not from any steady principle of religion, but because his tastes were capable of more elegant enjoyment; he was penitent for all his errors, because they stood between him and his hopes of Olivia, and often he told her, that if she would direct him, he could never err again—if his faults gave her pain, they could exist no more.

Olivia desired him to be directed by a higher motive than that of pleasing her; but still her bright eyes spoke her gratified sense of his affection; and when her fond brother saw that his presence gave back to her beautiful countenance all its faded smiles, he could not, while her sisterly affection confined her to the gloom which now pervaded his dwelling, deprive her of this only sunshine of her life; he wished indeed to deprive himself of the consolation of her society, in order to remove her to the cheerful home of Elizabeth, where the advantage of a separation from Howard might be obtained, without the same injury to her spirits and health as was to be apprehended at Clanalvon Castle; but it was impossible to prevail upon her to consent to a measure which she was sensible would increase his unhappiness, and she continued, without opposition, to enjoy the society of Robert Howard, who was a particular favourite with Cecilia, as she considered him the only person who loved Emily Nugent, and yet felt for her cordial affection and admiration.

These sentiments he shewed at first, even while under strong irritation against her, on account of Emily Nugent, because they were the only means of securing to him that intimacy in the house which both love and friendship made him anxious to preserve, and they soon became real; for where Cecilia felt herself loved and admired, she was peculiarly fascinating.

Miserable for his sister, for his mother, whose elastic spirits seemed at times likely, by constant discomfort, to lose their spring—for Cecilia, whose perception of his deficiency of attachment was often and vehemently expressed—more than all, miserable for the fate of Emily Nugent—angry with himself for almost every feeling which passed through his breast, Clanalvon felt that in his present situation he could not live; he felt that justice towards Cecilia should compel him to abandon the spot where the idea of Emily, ever tenderly present to his mind, was constantly recalled to it with torturing regret; and as torturing comparisons between her and his wife, which in cooler moments he thought must be almost as disadvantageous to any other woman as to her, he felt also that in a short absence from her he could collect his scattered thoughts, he could calm his feelings, and perhaps, on his return, be enabled to make her happy.

After some consideration, and having by letter consulted Montague and Elizabeth, he one day told her that he thought travelling might be of use in removing his constant headaches, and that he had resolved, if she agreed to it, to make a short tour through France and Switzerland.

Cecilia's countenance brightened, and she exclaimed, that she was delighted indeed at his having proposed a plan so well suited to her taste and wishes. She, of course, would go with him.

Lady Clanalvon pleaded, that in her

present situation, travelling must be as injurious to her as it would be beneficial to him; and he gave utterance to only one of the many feelings which throbbed in his heart—his long-cherished and ardent desire that his child should be born an Irishman.

She admired his patriotic enthusiasm, but she could return before her confinement; and she answered every objection, by repeating, that had Olivia wished to go, and wanted a *chaperon*, she would not have met this opposition.

Clanalvon yielded, grieved to the heart to see the scheme, which he had considered the only means of finding happiness for her, or peace to himself, thus frustrated, and to find that every attempt to amend their wretched situation only increased its misery.

Olivia wished to accompany them; but as Cecilia seemed eagerly to cling to the idea of being alone with him, he indulged her, and arranged for his mother and sister to remain in town, where Charles and

Elizabeth would be to see them off, and spend the next two months.

Before they left Clanalvon Castle, whenever Cecilia was so busied in her preparations as not to notice his absence, he yielded to the melancholy gratification of revisiting alone all the favourite haunts of Emily; and from these excursions he returned with feelings soothed, though saddened, and with a tender wish to please Cecilia, increased by his reflections on his deficiency in the ardent attachment for which her heart seemed to pine.

The short interval that was spent in Dublin was a little enlivened by the society of Charles and Elizabeth, though the perfect happiness they seemed to enjoy drove many a pang of unenvying regret to the heart of their unhappy brother.

Early in the month of March, the young earl and countess of Clanalvon crossed the sea, in order to go to France by Dover; and often on their melancholy journey the last bright smile of Olivia returned on his mind, as the last beam of departed happiness; that smile had been given him a few days before he left her, when he had fondly said, that he soon hoped to see her as happy with Robert Howard as Elizabeth was with Montague; for latterly he had become hopeless of detaching her heart from him, and from his late conduct had begun to view the subject in that favourable light to which his own affection for Robert inclined him.

The journey was but slowly pursued, as often the indisposition of Cecilia would detain them more than a week at one place; and often she loitered to so late an hour before they set off, that it was impossible to complete more than one stage in the daylight; and if they attempted a second, her terrors of robbers, banditti, overturns, &c. harassed her frame and his spirits; every thing seemed to annoy her, while the real cause of the interior dissatisfaction, that threw a gloom over all around her, was the ill-concealed wretchedness of her husband.

His attentions to her were watchful and

unceasing, but the look and voice of animated affection accompanied them not. Pity, fondness, grateful tenderness, he felt for her; the only gratification he was now capable of receiving was in contributing to her happiness; but that ardour of attachment, which could draw its own happiness from her alone, was utterly wanting.

She indeed possessed a soft helplessness, too endearing not to gain an interest in a heart so generous and amiable as that of Clanalvon; but, in close intimacy, there was an imbecility in her character, which made any permanently-strong sentiment towards her impossible. She perfectly felt that a look from her, or the slightest wish expressed or understood, was a law to him; but though her mind, and her command over it, was weak, her own feelings were full of ardour, and she painfully felt the want of it in his; all the fond, admiring devotion with which she had loved him, continued unabated; she could not blame him for his want of equal love; but dreadful was the self-reproachful feeling which often covered her cheek with painful blushes, that she had wilfully deceived herself; and often, when she marked some generous, noble feeling, when a smile, full of sensibility and intelligence glowed on his countenance, she almost wished that it were now possible for her to witness his perfect happiness with another; and that other—that other who alone was worthy of him, she felt was Emily Nugent. In the beginning of her marriage, while she still cherished the hope of possessing her husband's ardent affection, she could not bear to give admittance to an idea which must destroy the illusion, and therefore forcibly chased from her breast every suspicion of his attachment to Emily; but as this hope gradually faded, and she became sensible that though the object of his indulgent tenderness, she had never been that of his love, she found it less grating to her feelings to attribute the want of ardour in his affection for her to the prevalence of a prior attachment, rather than to her own want of the power of exciting it.

A short, very short time now remained until the awful period when Cecilia was to become a mother, or to quit a world in which she was capable of so little solid enjoyment; and this approaching crisis of her fate led to reflections of the most beneficial tendency to a mind not so much deficient in understanding as in the power of using it. She was in a great measure a visionary, fond rather of modelling objects by her imagination, than of discerning their real state; but in the awful trial suspended over her, all was reality.

We are not deluded into error by the uncertainty of death; of its certainty at one time or other, every creature is aware; but it is the uncertainty of the period in which this awful transition from one state of existence to another may take place, which renders so large a proportion of mankind careless in preparing for it. Though in pregnancy the final result, for death, or life with an added blessing, is doubtful, the period in which that momentous question is to be decided is fixed and determined; accident may bring it nearer, but nothing can postpone it; and lost to every serious impression must the woman be who can for several months have this alternative placed before her eyes, without deriving mental improvement from it. How beautiful is this order of nature, which ushers the infant into the world with circumstances which render the mother more fitted for the sacred trust!

Once led to solid reflection, Cecilia had much to pause upon, much to correct; and now, instead of trusting to the blind guide of her own sensibility, she prayed to be directed; instead of persisting in efforts to obtain that line of happiness for which she had painfully and vainly struggled, she resolved to seek the esteem of her husband, and to become a really-useful character; instead of fretfully lamenting his want of devoted love, she learned to admire and wish to imitate the exalted and disinterested sensibility which taught him such tenderness and indulgence towards one who had, she was too well aware, deeply and irrecoverably injured him.

As the mother of his already-darling child, Clanalvon's warm heart glowed with a new emotion towards her; his pitying, grateful affection for her increased to a more respectful and a fonder sentiment; still Emily Nugent remained the only object on whom his mind could turn, as the being who would have been all to him—who would have been more than now he could look back to without almost maddening anguish. In her his whole heart was still wrapped up; but the approaching danger of Cecilia filled his bosom with a sentiment for which he could scarcely account.

Cecilia hung with delighted love upon his increased tenderness; the natural timidity of her disposition made her feel certain that she could not survive her *confinement*; but often she thought that the pangs of death would be a joy indeed, could her closing eyes behold him hanging over her expiring form.

Thus, in watchful care on the part of Clanalvon, and of fluttered joy on that of Cecilia, passed the first few weeks of their residence in France. Soon was the peaceful period at an end; a letter from lady Elizabeth Montague soon and dreadfully destroyed the short-lived calm. It was as follows:—

"I know not how to prepare my dearest Clanalvon for an event for which we were ourselves unprepared; nothing I could say could lessen the shock. I will only desire you to be resigned. It is indeed a circumstance so unlooked-for, so dreadful, that I can scarcely ask you to endeavour to be composed, for Cecilia's sake. I do not know how farther to delay the whole sad history—I must go on at once, but will give you all the preparation we had ourselves.

" Since our return to town, lord Belville has made many efforts to regain his former intimacy with Robert Howard; but, as our letters have informed you, dear Robert firmly resisted them, knowing that our family disapproved the connexion. The day but one before yesterday, they met at our house, and I noticed them a few minutes in conversation—but there was then nothing remarkable. After lord Belville went, he was in the highest spirits; he whispered Olivia, that lord Belville had failed in all his endeavours to lead him back to the gaming-table. But, alas! one fatal effort was yet untried.

" It is best to go on to tell you each circumstance of the last three days. That evening, all life and animation, he gave pleasure to all around him; and I thought that he was really formed by nature for our darling Olivia—precious creature! that last delightful evening she smiled those lovely looks of peaceful, yet animated happiness, which you so fondly loved, looking forward only to a continuance of present enjoyment in the future. You remember what powers of pleasing Robert possessed, and how much he seemed to enjoy the style of conversation he met with us. Never did I so ardently hope that he and our Olivia might yet be as happy together as we are—never did I feel all fear on the subject, so completely groundless as that evening; the looks of happy love he fixed on her can never be forgotten. He left us, promising to come again the following evening; but in vain we expected him. Mamma thought that some other engagement interfered; but poor Olivia blushed, and said she knew he would not neglect that engagement for any other, and she was sure he would come. At length however mamma received a note, saying it was impossible for him to see us that evening.

"During breakfast this morning, Charles was called out, and did not return. As I was going up stairs, I met my maid, who said she feared all was not right, as Charles turned deadly pale on hearing a message from lord Howard's servant, and that he had gone away with him, seeming violently agitated.

"According to Susan's advice, I went to mamma, and, without mentioning my fears, urged her to go out immediately with Olivia on some business. When proposed to her, Olivia begged to stay; and I saw that she wished to wait for Robert's usual morning-visit. However, as I pressed her strongly, she consented to go, while I remained anxiously waiting the return of Charles. In a few minutes I got a note from him. At that moment our dear Robert lay senseless, and almost lifeless—it was a duel with lord Belville.

"This was all I then knew. Charles wished me to go immediately to him. As I entered, I heard the shrieks of his mother—that cold phlegmatic woman—they went to my very heart. Charles brought me in silence to his room. The unhappy father hung over him—Miss Howard and the children were sobbing around the bed.—'Go to your poor mother, Sarah,' said lord Howard, as I entered.

"When he heard me, he turned—his countenance——But why should I torture you with such descriptions?—'Speak to him, lady Elizabeth,' said the poor old man, motioning to some of the children to make way for me.

"Death was marked in his face, and he seemed quite insensible. I stooped to speak to him. He pressed my hand, opened his eyes, and smiled. He murmured the name of Olivia—his lips continued to move; he smiled again, and died. Charles led me away. The unhappy father at the moment sunk to the ground—all his pride, all his hopes, all his affections, had centered in his lost Robert. The grief of lady Howard was yet wilder and more unrestrained; but while I was engaged in fruitless efforts to turn her mind to the only source of consolation, all became suddenly known to the deepest sufferer in the calamity. Mamma, unconscious of the circumstance, called to visit lady Howard. Sarah saw the carriage, and instantly flew down. I have since heard that, opening the door, she rushed into the street; and, by her countenance, mamma at once guessed the truth. Sarah grasped Olivia's hand, sobbing violently, unable to speak. Mamma brought her into the carriage, imploring her to tell what had happened; but she could only sob out—'Robert!'—'What of him, for Heaven's sake!' mamma exclaimed. She replied—'He is dead! Robert is killed!' with renewed shrieks.

"Our precious Olivia did not utter a word, but sunk in mamma's arms, as if she was gone for ever. Miss Howard brought me to her—our efforts have been in vain to restore her; but she lives, and is not, the physicians say, in a dangerous state. I scarcely know what I have said.

"I have written so far while she lay in a kind of sleep. I dreaded lest my beloved Clanalvon should hear it perhaps in an exaggerated form. I must now stop—

it is almost daylight. In the morning I will add some account of how she appears.

"Charles has just learned from a young man, who was present, the whole course of this fatal event. At dinner, the day before yesterday, lord Belville met him, when, after dinner, he again urged his cruel request, that Robert would accompany him to the club-house; with the firmness which he has latterly displayed, he refused to do so. Lord Belville dwelt on the pleasures of the gaming-table, with that persuasive eloquence in which he prided himself, and reminded Robert how much he had once enjoyed them.—'I do remember,' said Robert, 'and perhaps this recollection of my errors, and the repentance of them I ought to feel, were necessary to enable me to resist the eloquence with which lord Belville defends them.' Lord Belville cast on him a look full of malice and vengeance; but the subject then passed away.

"In the evening, just as he was preparing to leave the company, and come to us, he approached him.—'You are going to lady Clanalvon's,' he said. Robert coldly replied in the affirmative.—'And when the happy husband returns, we may hope once more that Mr. Howard will honour our meetings with his presence,' added lord Belville, with a malevolent smile; 'for it is well known that the reform wrought by the pretty saint, lady Olivia, has been aided by the absence of her brother's purse."

The remainder was in Charles's hand.

"Lizzy was here called away to Olivia, who then aroused from the stupor into which she had fallen. Some incautious friends may write to you, in a manner that will give you needless pangs in respect to her—it is therefore best to arm you against misrepresentation, by stating the exact truth. Her mind is *at present bewildered* by the abrupt discovery of an event so dreadful; but you may rely upon it, that there is nothing of real derangement in the case. I dispatch this, to be beforehand with newspaper or other accounts, but hope to follow it very soon with one more favourable. There is not time for more. May you be supported, dearest Clanalvon, under your many trials! Your dear mother, since the first shock, has borne it as well as we could hope for; though she feels deeply, she is not ill. Lizzy is the help and comfort of every one, and for their sakes regards neither her own fatigue or sorrow. From the report of the physicians, I can confidently hope to write you good tidings of our darling Olivia in a few days. Adieu!"

* * *

Without a pause Clanalvon read to the end; but when he had finished, the letter dropped from his hand. He felt himself the murderer of his friend—the destroyer of his sister. It was he had introduced Belville to Howard—it was his blind partiality towards him which first induced Robert to regard him as a suitable companion.—" Of all I have been guilty, except, till now, of murder!" he wildly exclaimed. A shuddering recollection of the dying Emily crossed his mind; his agonized feelings bordered on derangement—as Cecilia was not present, he had no object for which to restrain them.

Shuddering with mental anguish, he rushed from his home; his wild idea was to fly to Ireland, to see his sister, and perhaps embrace the cold remains of Robert. His wife, the infant on whom he had fixed his hopes—all were forgotten. He had never learned to bound his feelings; he had always given them unrestrained liberty, and now they overpowered him. His temples throbbed—his pulse beat high, as with feverish rapidity he pursued the path to which chance directed him; but sometimes he would check his steps, and think was it a dream? or was it indeed possible that Robert, all life and animation as he had left him, was now a cold senseless corpse; that Olivia, just rising into womanhood, just glowing in all the sweetest hopes of youth, now blighted in all her happy heart had fastened on, was withering under the chill, murderous hand which had deprived her of her lover?—"Oh, truly," he exclaimed, "that sweet smile which dwelt so long upon my mind—that lovely treasured smile, was the last which ever illumined her cheerless prospects; and I the cause—I the murderer of Howard—and through him, of Olivia!"

The recollection of the infantine endearments of his sister—of all the sweetness he had loved, changed the course of his feelings from wild distraction to more tender sorrow, and by degrees he regained sufficient composure to reflect on the situation of his wife, and to determine to return to her, and conceal the anguish of his heart from her, to whom it might prove as destructive as the fatal event he lamented had been to Olivia.

With a fortitude surprising to himself, he conversed with her as if nothing had occurred; but his anguished feelings, though concealed, were not to be conquered, and the very violence he did them served only to increase their injurious power over a constitution already shaken by a long course of agitation and suffering.

The apprehensive tenderness of his wife soon discovered symptoms of fever, which, in the course of the following day, arose to the most alarming height. Separated from every friend who might have soothed and divided her cares, night and day Cecilia hung over him, regardless of the danger to which her incessant fatigue exposed her own life, and that of her infant.

An old and attached servant frequently reminded her of this, and entreated her to rest; but—"No," said Cecilia, "if he dies, why should I remain a wretched burden on the earth? and if my cares restore him, how gladly will I die—how gladly see my child resign its first breath for his dear sake!" and in distracted affliction she continued to hang over his pillow, and to hear every feeling, long denied utterance, in delirium communicated to her as a friend who would sympathize with him.

At times he knew Cecilia, and would tenderly caution her against fatiguing herself; at others he spoke to her as a person he loved, without even remembering her name. On the third day of his illness, awaking from a painful slumber, he said, looking around him—"And have I no friend left?"

"Yes; I am with you, dearest," replied poor Cecilia.

"Yes, and you are a friend; yes, you can feel for me. Oh, go to my Emily! Leave me to die, and go tell her I love her. But stay; tell me of Olivia, and bring me to Howard. But, see, see, do not tell my poor Cecilia—do not tell her that I am wretched—do not tell her of my love to Emily—do not make her uneasy, for I love her. Oh, I love her too much for my happiness, and too little for hers! Yet tell Emily, that never has one thought strayed from her; tell her that in my child I hope to find a creature such as she was, all loveliness and virtue—that in every feeling she has been first—that even in the dreadful death of Howard I thought on her. She is always with me; and when I think of her, it is with resignation—with patient though hopeless woe: she was so perfect—so heavenly-minded, that every feeling connected with her, even those of sorrow, seem to partake of Heaven; she was all in all to me. Olivia would now be the happy wife of O'Donnel, had Emily——But do not tell Cecilia; it would grieve her. My dear Cecilia, she shall not suffer unnecessary affliction. Nor do not let her know about Olivia. Ah, why was I reminded of them? My poor heart! Do not let Cecilia feel as I feel."

The only selfish care poor Cecilia could now entertain, was the fear that her fatigue and anxiety would bring on her illness, so that she would be forced to leave him. If he lived, she feared a separation, for her own strength was almost exhausted;

but if he died, she felt that they would be eternally united; and yet she prayed with as much earnestness, that he might live to be happy, as if she had ventured to hope that she could make him so. She had never known how tender was his affection for her, or with what ardent attachment she loved him, until this illness.

Hope did not once visit her for many, many days, and she soon found that unless its reviving influence came to cheer her, she could not long persevere in her unceasing attendance; her frame was so totally exhausted, that tedious swoonings often followed any change for the worse; yet the instant she recovered to a recollection of his illness, her own was forgotten, and she would fly back to him, as if refreshed by the suspension of her faculties. His health at length began gradually to recover; but he was left weak, to a degree which terrified her that his illness would take another turn, equally dangerous.

It was on the first day that he was well enough to be removed from one room to another, that the anxiety which had seemed to give her strength being in a degree suspended, Cecilia was taken ill. By the positive orders of the physician, and her own tenderly-urged request, Clanalvon remained in a distant part of the house.

A few hours of anxious suspense had passed, when a servant came to inform him that he was a father, and that Cecilia lived; but from the manner in which the intelligence was given, he felt that she was far from safe; a moment after his daughter was placed in his arms. Fancy gave to her features the resemblances dearest to her unhappy father; but that which really existed was a mingled likeness to him and to her mother. As he clasped the baby to his heart, a fondness of protecting love, which he had never felt before, swelled there; the precious infant seemed to fill in herself the void in his heart, or rather, he seemed to possess all he loved in her.

Anxiously he pressed for admission to Cecilia's apartment. It was granted him;

but with sorrow unspeakable he saw the weakened state to which she was reduced; scarcely could she extend her hand to his—scarcely could her quivering lips pronounce his name, yet a smile trembled on them, and on her cold, pale cheek.

In broken accents Cecilia desired that a paper which lay in her escritoire should be brought to her. She put it into the hand of her husband, and whispered—"If I recover, return it; but if not, remember it is the last will of your dying wife—remember that in death my heart will cling to the wish expressed in it."

"Oh, my Cecilia!" he exclaimed, "my beloved, my ever-tender, darling Cecilia, your wishes are all sacred to me! but, dying!—oh, do not farther rend my heart!"

The hand he held was pressed with strong emotion in both of his, and his lip rested on her forehead.

"Oh, I am blessed!" she exclaimed. "Rejoice with me!" and, sinking on his bosom, she expired.

Weakened in body by his long illness,

and in mind by the affliction which caused it, Clanalvon could scarcely sustain this new and heavy stroke. With sorrow incomprehensible to those who cannot conceive that the heart, while devoted with almost adoration to one object, may feel the tenderest emotions of grateful affection towards another, he hung over the lifeless form of his wife.

The chill hand of death seemed to have cast its blighting influence over every object. He thought of Emily lying as Cecilia now lay—no other picture than those of death and devastation could he raise to his imagination—Olivia, what she had been in form, but alienated in mind, perhaps unable to distinguish her idolized brother, were he near her, from the strangers around her—Elizabeth, faded and exhausted, in painful attendance on her—his mother and Charles reproaching him as the cause of all—Howard cold in the grave—Mrs. Nugent, deprived of her only tie to earth, dragging on a weary existence, lost to every hope, or perhaps perishing under the chill hand which had torn Emily from her arms:—such were the objects which flitted before his eyes, as, in the dead of night, he returned to the apartment of Cecilia, once more to press her to his breast. Her last desire returned to his mind; and drawing her letter from his bosom, he called for his child, with some indistinct idea of a gratification in her presence, while he read the last will of her mother.

"Whenever this meets your eyes, you will regard it with tenderness, as the last relic of your Cecilia, and your precious tears will fall on the last lines traced by her. I am weak, and my hand trembles; I fear, my best beloved, that if I longer delay, I shall be incapable of writing.

"In the very ravings of illness, as in every moment since my coming here, with thrilling delight I have felt that you fondly love me. I once thought other wise—I once feared that you did not consider me worthy of your love, and my mind was then restless and unhappy; but I have lately learned, that had it not been for one dear image previously impressed upon your heart, it might have been fully mine.

"If my life is spared, it would be my joy and pride to make you all the amends in my power for the loss you have sustained in her: but it will not be; my strength is so exhausted, that I am fully sensible there is not sufficient left to bear the approaching struggle of nature. You will lament me; but remember, my beloved, that I die with hopes and views, which were not mine until I knew you; from you—from your dear example, I have learned to trace to its source the goodness, the rectitude with which you have at onee preserved inviolate the attachment you owe to the inestimable object of your love, and to bestow on her who had committed her happiness into your hands, that indulgent tenderness which even my faults (and

I am now sensible of many which I once considered virtues) could never exhaust. Though severed from you, I will be happy—happy, in some measure through your means, and therefore not an object of your regret.

"Happiness still awaits you; Emily may be yours. Whatever was the cause that disunited you, she loves you; and she is still the dearest, as she was the first, object of your affections. She loves me also; and, should my child survive, will cherish it for its mother's sake, as well as for its father's. In this sweet hope of happiness for you, for it, and for my dearest friend, all the most earnest wishes of my heart are fulfilled.

"My dying request to you is, that as soon as the last duties are fulfilled towards me, you will hasten to Ireland, to comfort your afflicted family, and find comfort in their society; tell them all that I gratefully feel their kindness towards me.

"As soon as the state of the dear, suffering Olivia's health permits you to leave her, go to my beloved Emily, and engage her promise to become your wife, and the mother of my child. In the meantime, the ever-kind Elizabeth may, by letter, reconcile whatever difference exists between you. Your dear Cecilia will rejoice in your mutual happiness; my spirit will hover around you—it will bless the dear mother of my child—you will think of me together. In death it is my hope to see this blessed union, and you will be blessed. My child will be reared a second Clanalvon or a second Emily. Oh! I long to be gone, and to see you happy, and Emily restored to health. My last breath will bless the two objects most dear to me on earth. Adieu, adieu for ever, my only love! I do not think I shall long continue here; but in death, as in life, I am your own "CECILIA.

"It is my wish, that my child, should it be a girl, may be called Emily Cecilia; and now I trust my mind will remain fixed on things far above this world; be happy, as you deserve to be. Farewell, my best beloved!"

"Farewell, indeed, cold, lifeless form! no longer animated by that generous spirit which now hovers over her husband and her child, and is *now* perhaps joined above by that of her friend."

He sunk on his knees, and after a few minutes pause he exclaimed, raising the child in his arms—"Oh, may this precious infant be free from all the faults of her unhappy father! may she be gentle, generous, lovely, as her mother! and, oh! may she meet a happier fate! Sainted spirits! guard her from sin and sorrow—teach her to follow your steps to heaven; and may her father learn himself to instruct her!—all others *now* are lost."

His deep and hopeless affliction was more than he could endure; a relapse was the consequence, and in a few days afte that which gave her birth, it appeare most probable, that the smiling, unco scious infant would soon be left a helpless orphan in a foreign country. Still, in the wildness of fever, he would call for her; and as he clasped her to his bosom, murmur with mournful tenderness the name —"Emily Cecilia."

It was his delirious fancy that Emily too was dead, and that all dear to him had deserted him, as the destroyer of her, Cecilia, Howard, and Olivia—"And thou only art left!" he would exclaim, gazing with exquisite fondness on his child; "thou only art left to love thy guilty but unhappy father!"

But one was near who affectionately loved him; the tears of Elizabeth Montague often fell on his burning forehead, when she heard his mournful raving. On hearing from the physicians of his first illness on the death of Robert, and of the ceaseless fatigue and anxiety of Cecilia, she consigned Olivia to her mother's care, and hastened, with her husband, once more to see, and endeavour to console her brother, and share Cecilia's cares; or, if he was gone, to protect and comfort his widow, and watch over his orphan. They came, and found Cecilia in the grave, and her husband apparently stretched on the bed of death.

Clanalvon's recovery was slow; it would be tedious to trace its progress, and vain to attempt to paint the mingled, indescribable feelings which engrossed his mind. To tell with what fond and grateful affliction he hung over the tomb of his wife, would seem to say that she who still reigned unrivalled in the possession of his heart was no longer loved; to tell with what tremulous, doubtful delight he learned that Emily yet lived, and might perhaps be his, would seem an insult to the dear memory of Cecilia. Suffice it then to say, that three months after the remains of Cecilia had been consigned to the grave, he was permitted by the physicians to leave France, with his brother, sister, and child, on his return to Ireland.

So weakened was he by illness and sorrow, that their journey was but slowly pursued, although, with hopes and feelings scarcely acknowledged to himself, he longed for its conclusion; but during its progress, his affectionate friends had the opportunity of observing, with inexpressible delight, the moral advantage he had derived from his many afflictions; they had been the means of giving him that steadiness and power of reflection which alone were wanting to his noble character: where he had only *felt* before, he now *reasoned* —he had learned, instead of instinctively promoting whatever was most gratifying to the object present to his feelings, to consider what was most conducive to their lasting happiness; had he been now to live over again, the desire of giving her momentary pleasure would never have induced him to win on the heart of Cecilia by attentions which she attributed to love: he had learned to curb his impetuous feelings, and to see by the clear sunshine of reason, instead of by their fitful flame: not *now* would Emily have been lost to him, because the wild commotion of his breast deluded his judgment, as to the purport of a letter, which should have fixed him more firmly hers than ever: he had learned, that encouragement of error must ever be the discouragement of virtue; not *now* had Robert Howard been drawn into vice, by a man whom he was led to consider worthy, as the friend and companion of the being he most esteemed on earth.

"Should we ever repine, my Lizzy?" said Montague to her one day. "See how all the sorrows we lamented have worked together for his good. Even in this world, should Emily be restored to him, as I feel well convinced she will be, how much more happy will he be than he could have been formerly! he was then one of the most glorious works of untaught nature—he is now a Christian; how many new sources of happiness does this open to him!—resigned under affliction, and gratefully desirous to make the most of every blessing; 'truly the righteous inherit the earth."

At length, eight months after he quitted Dublin, he re-entered it, enfeebled in health, and his heart sinking with apprehension of the tidings which might await him. Every step, as the carriage approached his house, served to remind him of Robert Howard. Olivia too was more than ever present to his thoughts—Olivia what she had been, and Olivia what he expected to see her. The fond embrace of his mother—the delight with which she regarded his infant, warmed his breast with the first glow of pleasure he had experienced since its birth; but short-lived was the emotion—Montague entered the room, supporting what appeared rather the shade than the living form of his favourite sister; pale, emaciated, the glance of joy extinguished in her eyes—she sunk, half-fainting, on his bosom.

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Clanalvon, as he enfolded her in his arms.

"Do not, do not," she said; "I am

better—quite well—almost well, dearest, dearest Clanalvon."

But it was impossible for the kind deceit with which she tried to sooth him, to conceal that sorrow had taken strong hold on every feeling; before he saw her, however, resignation had in a great degree calmed her first agony of grief; she felt, though her blindness permitted her not to see it, that the design of Providence in taking Robert was for the best. She bent submissively under the stroke, and did not even permit herself impatiently to wish that she might follow him; for if she was left in this world, it was evident she still had some duty in it—perhaps that of preparing herself for a better, by perfect submission to her present inflictions.

It was a letter from Emily Nugent, full of the ardent holiness which inspired her own breast, that had been the means of working this change in the distracted feelings of Olivia Fitzmaurice. For some weeks after the dreadful shock of Howard's death, her senses had fled, and in recovering to a full knowledge of her misfortune, it was with reason dreaded that they would again be lost. To no hope of peace could she turn—no ray of happiness seemed capable of piercing the despair in which she was plunged; and still the strongest causes of her affliction were, the increased sorrow to her idolized brother, and the knowledge of the self-reproach with which he would deplore his having been the first person to introduce Robert to the fatal society of lord Belville.

In a state little short of derangement, Olivia had passed another month, when the letter of Emily, who had just then heard of the death of her ill-fated lover, gave a resignation and calmness to her feelings, of which she had believed them incapable.

Emily did not attempt to make light of the affliction—she only taught her how to bear it. She had also derived much religious consolation from an unknown friend, in a letter without signature, which spoke the writer acquainted with sorrow, and with the healing balm of that mild, confiding piety which alone makes sorrow supportable.

With sincere pleasure Clanalvon recognized in this letter the handwriting of lord O'Donnell. That of Emily Olivia also shewed him, and as he read it, he felt something of the resignation she so sweetly urged, rise in his own breast—he felt that without her he could know no earthly happiness; but he felt also that he could relinquish happiness without despair. He had not yet inquired about her; he knew that she lived, but could not find courage to ask how far her state was considered dangerous. Having read her letter, he found his power to meet calamity, rather than his hope of not being called to encounter it, so much strengthened, that he desired his mother would candidly inform him whether her illness were mortal.

Lady Clanalvon said, that her physician as yet perceived no symptom of immediate danger; but at the same time warned him, that a long continuance of her present declining state must prove fatal: with floods of tears she then confessed the affair of the letter, stating her reasons for suppressing it; but saying that she was now, too late, aware that its having reached Emily, might have preserved her darling son from all the affliction of the last eighteen months.

Enough of the sanguine spirit for which he had once been famed, still inspired the grief-worn bosom of Clanalvon, to make him catch eagerly at the hope his mother's account of Emily contained. To write to her was his first object; he enclosed the letter of Cecilia, and, without daring one profession of attachment, he wrote a detailed account of every circumstance, save those connected with the fretful temper of Cecilia, since the moment he had last seen her; and entreated with earnestness to be permitted to see her, saying, that unless he received a positive prohibition, he would consider his request granted; and a few days after this letter was dispatched, taking a mournful farewell of Olivia, he set off, with his infant and lady Clanalvon, for Devonshire.

When she had crossed the sea, and was actually on the road which was to restore Emily to their sight, the mother believed that all sorrow was at an end; already she saw her long-dejected boy once more the glowing, joy-inspiring promoter of universal happiness—already she saw her precious Olivia reviving, in the magic circle which Emily cast around her—already she saw her little granddaughter clasped to the tender bosom of a second mother; and the idea of seeing her favourite Emily smiling, in the power of bestowing so much bliss, was not among the least pleasing of her reflections.

Clanalvon's feelings of mingled hope and fear were to himself indefinable; therefore to attempt to describe them must indeed be vain.

When they had reached the last stage of their journey, it was agreed that he, with his little charge, should proceed alone to the house of Mrs. Nugent, while his mother remained at the neighbouring village; for affectionately kind as were her present sentiments towards Emily, she had in no small degree aided in his marriage with Cecilia Hazlewood, and she did not wish to meet the Nugents, who were among those to whom her really-warm heart had once been most romantically attached, until they were prepared to receive her with forgetfulness of the year when they left Dublin, and she attended Cecilia as the bride of her son, with all the delighted tenderness which had been fondly promised to her favourite Emily.

With feelings which scarcely admitted the possibility of happiness, yet with horror flying from the idea of the only circumstance which could prevent it—praying for resignation, in case of an event on which he dared not think—remembering his last short interview with Emily—thinking on all her perfections and all his faults—and memory sometimes returning with heart-aching pity and grateful fondness, to her whose precious baby slept on his bosom, Clanalvon pursued his way on foot to the spot where a poor woman informed him her benefactresses, Mrs. and Miss Nugent, resided. This woman evidently could tell him all his heart longed to know; but her mention of the name assured him that Emily yet lived, and he dared not inquire farther.

Leaving him just returning to her whose dear idea had always calmed and turned towards resignation the woe which it excited, let us look back to that long-unseen object of universal love.

Emily Nugent was a living example that virtue has its reward here as well as hereafter; for, cut off at the early age of eighteen from all her young ardent heart had fixed on, for *outward* earthly happiness, and deprived of it by him in whom her affections centered with undoubting love—lost to every friend, save her whose eyes watched every movement of hers, her life flowed on in that peaceful tranquillity which the exercise of virtue could alone have given her. Every recollection of Clanalvon which turned her mind with any strong regret to a joyless world, in which she had long ceased to expect real felicity, she checked by the thought of how much superior was her present state, how much better prepared for the better life on which she must one day enter, than when such happiness bound her to earth.

Emily's pious mind had always acted by a ruling principle—her heart had always been devoted to Heaven; but now she walked on the earth as one whose spirit was above, and only descended on her human form to inspire it for the good of all who came within the wide circle of her benevolence.

No one valued the things of the world less than Emily had always done. Its pomps, its vanities, or its pleasures, were to her but the amusements of a passing hour; her real happiness she always found in the exercise of the affections; it was therefore deeply wounded, but not annihilated; still, independent of the joys of Heaven which opened to her enraptured view, she possessed it in some degree. Every human creature was dear and interesting to her as such, and never did her expansive heart feel totally lost to earthly pleasure, while she could hear of the welfare of others; nor did she feel that vacant blank which the loss of valued affection too frequently occasions, while one afflicted heart could be made lighter by her consolations—while her presence could add one joy to prosperity—while her animated conversation, and apparent cheerfulness, could beguile her aunt of one smile.

Emily could not experience the dreary vacuity of one who, having lost what was dearest to her, stands an uninterested spectator of passing scenes.

The physician who attended Emily, said that not one complaint had fastened on her constitution; but a general debility of frame, caused by the nervous fever, which agitation of mind had never suffered her really to recover, he found unconquerable, and was sensible that the slightest cold was now liable to fasten on her lungs—the slightest emotion to overthrow her little remaining strength. Of this she was herself also aware; and placid and unrepining as was her gentle spirit, she had nothing to lament in leaving this world, except the desolate state of her aunt.

"Alas, my darling child!" said poor Mrs. Nugent, one day, when Emily had used every argument which piety could dictate, to encourage her not to despair, in case of the separation so dreaded by both, "I do not think that this excess of sorrow would overwhelm me for the utter wreck of my own happiness. But, oh! my Emily, your short life, how little has it been chequered by happiness! what have you to regret in quitting this earth?"

"The ties which bound me there have been nearly dissolved; but one dear tie now exists between me and this world," replied Emily; "to you alone, my beloved aunt, do I feel myself necessary."

"But in a manner how abrupt, my child," said Mrs. Nugent, "just as your poor heart revived from the affliction of your dear father's death, have you been deprived of all!"

"Rather say," replied Emily, with a smile, "that the peculiar happiness with which Heaven blessed me has not continued long. Were this my rest, I might indeed repine at the early loss of all, except you, that was dear to me; but, dearest aunt, this is a stony path through which we pass to the perfection of all happiness; for every blessing we should be grateful, instead of repining at their short continuance; and in this briery, stony way, oh, what sweet, sweet flowers I have gathered!" and poor Emily's tearful eyes smiled as she spoke.

"Indeed, indeed, my love," said Mrs. Nugent, "I trust I am not of an ungrateful spirit—I feel that all is for the best—my reason tells me that it is; and my heart bends to Heaven's decision, be it what it may; but yet I should feel less, had your life been happier. What, what have you now, my only darling, but your aunt?"

"But I have still my angel aunt," said Emily, kissing her, with sweet endearment; "and I ought to be grateful for that dear blessing; and have I not other sources of enjoyment, even independent of my internal feelings? I should have wished, I do confess it, once, without his knowledge, to have seen him I loved so well. You know all my thoughts, aunt, and you know how he was entwined round my heart."

"He was indeed, my innocent, confiding child. You trusted all your earthly happiness to him," exclaimed Mrs. Nugent, bursting into tears.

"No, not all, dear aunt—I trusted my earthly, with my eternal happiness, where I shall not be deceived," said Emily, with holy confidence, looking upward. "But surely I had not made him too much an idol? I was not wrong to love him as I did? Oh, no! amiable, noble, endearing as he was, he would not have been permitted so sedulously to seek my heart, if I was wrong in giving it."

"No, no, my dearest, it would have been cold, unfeeling to deny it. But where was his heart, when, deserting her who loved him so truly, he could take another in her place?"

"He did not desert me," exclaimed Emily; "you know it was I refused him—I gave him liberty. No, he did not faithlessly forsake me—he could not act so basely: he knew not that I loved him, and generosity towards Cecilia—he was so sensitive, so susceptible; he is not to blame." Emily spoke eagerly, but suddenly checking herself, she added, in a lower tone—"Ah! no, why had he encouraged her love? why did he not trust in me? Ah, aunt! see how necessary it was that I should be loosed from him, when I could excuse—admire a wrong action, because it was his."

In an uninterupted calm, without incident, as without emotion, save those of pious gratitude for every daily blessing, passed the beginning of that winter, so differently spent by the inhabitants of Clanalvon Castle.

Looking forward to the time when Mrs. Nugent would so much need the consolations of friendship, Emily found pleasure in cultivating that of the excellent clergyman of the parish, and of the physician who attended her, with their wives and families.

The marriage of Charles Montague and Elizabeth, to both of whom the aunt and niece were affectionately attached, gave Emily a pleasure unmingled; but poor Mrs. Nugent, with a sigh, reflected, that thus happy she had once hoped to see her Emily.

Fondly as her heart still clung to the female part of the Clanalvon family, and interested as she was in all connected with them, Emily had felt it indelicate and imprudent, by writing to them, to bring herself to the memory of Clanalvon, until he left them to go with his wife on the Continent, and then anxiously she wished that it were possible for her, without his knowledge, to convey to Cecilia a few kind lines, expressive of her unchanged regard for her; but she was well aware that his attachment for her, however the power of fancy might for a time have conquered it, was too fixed and rooted in his breast to be roused by any tender recollection of her, without destruction to his present happiness.

The month of May was now far advanced; all around the neighbourhood of Mrs. Nugent began to breathe the gaiety of summer. It was in this month they had last seen the gay, happy, warm-hearted Olivia Fitzmaurice, and a letter from Maria Mansfield now conveyed the intelligence of Robert Howard's death, and her despairing affliction. Robert had always marked for Emily the most respectful regard; and she in return felt the strongest interest in his welfare; but trifling was the real sorrow she experienced for him, compared with that which wrung her bosom for the situation of her beloved Olivia. As the sister of Clanalvon, she must have loved her, even though Olivia had not been in herself all that was endearing, and now, by the tenderest affection and sympathy, was dictated her letter to her friend; by all she had herself suffered, her feelings for others were rendered more acute. She did not know of the subsequent illness of Clanalvon; but scarcely had her feeble frame, and weakened spirits, begun to recover from the shock the fate of Howard and Olivia had given them, when, one day, as the friendly physician was reading to them the newspaper, in the hope of drawing Mrs. Nugent's mind from the one sad contemplation of Emily's failing strength, and Emily sat eagerly listening for something likely to interest her aunt, he read the following paragraph:—

"Died at T——, on the second of this month, regretted most by those who, by intimacy, knew her innumerable virtues, at the early age of twenty-two years, Cecilia, lady of the right honourable the earl of Clanalvon, after the birth of a daughter and heiress. We regret to state, that this highly-esteemed and universally-admired young nobleman is considered, by his physicians, to be in a situation highly dangerous. We understand that Mr. and lady Elizabeth Montague left Dublin immediately on this afflictive intelligence, to console their inestimable relative. We rejoice to learn that the noble infant is doing well."

"Have I not heard you mention lady Elizabeth Montague, Miss Nugent?" said doctor Selby, when he had finished; but overwhelmed by the shock she had received, Emily sunk fainting in the arms of her aunt.

"She knew lady Clanalvon," said Mrs. Nugent.

Emily soon revived; but the sudden revulsion of her feelings, from praying for Clanalvon's happiness, as the husband of

Cecilia, to see him sinking into her grave, was too much for her; her affectionate heart too had never been estranged from her early friend; it was an event absolutely unexpected; in all her contemplations of the probable turns of fate, the idea of Cecilia's death had never occurred to her. Weak as she was, Emily's frame could not bear so great a shock: another long nervous fever was the consequence, and she recovered from it enfeebled to the most helpless degree.

Doctor Selby now, with tears, confessed to his family, that he feared medicine could be of but little avail to his interesting and beloved patient; another such shock, he said, must be the last.

One day, when she felt unusually debilitated, she asked doctor Selby to give her his candid opinion of her case.

"My dear child," he said, "to you alone, as the person most resigned to the decree of Heaven, I give my true opinion. You may recover—often, when I see your countenance sparkle with animation, I think that it is more than possible; but I do not venture to expect it. You have shewn wonderful vitality of constitution in the recoveries you have already made; yet so feeble is your frame, so liable to injury from the slightest disturbance or irritation, that every passing breeze seems to threaten your life. I sometimes venture to hope that I may yet see you restored to health; but I would not feel surprised, in your present state, by your dying away in a few hours."

"Is it not a blessed manner for death to come?" said Emily, smiling; "sufficient possibility of recovery to spare me all the pangs of a certain separation from my aunt, yet not knowing but at the moment I speak, my spirit may soar above. I should wish to remain here at least another month; for my dearest aunt will then have kind friends in her own country—lady Clanalvon and lady Elizabeth Montague. However, that shall not make my mind uneasy; if they are not there, some other source of consolation will be raised for her; but—but——" Her voice trembled, and she burst into tears, as she said—" She must not continue here—her heart would break so near my grave."

" I have heard of happy deaths," said doctor Selby, " where the sufferer longed to be gone, and watched every passing moment with delight and impatience, as bringing them to an end of their pains and sorrows in this world. Surely this kind of impatience is wrong, though not so much so as that which clings to earth; but you are not impatient—you rejoice in the eternal blessedness which opens to your view, yet rest calmly here, thankful for every moment of your stay. Oh, Miss Nugent! my most earnest prayer shall ever be, that I may attain this peaceful reliance on the will of Providence!"

Emily smiled.—" Do you remember," said she, " the answer of your little Mary, when I asked her if she were glad to come home, and if she had been happy on her visit to her uncle?—' I was,' she said, ' and I was glad every day I staid, because I love my aunt and uncle; but I was gladder when mamma sent for me, because I love her and papa better.' Such are my feelings now. Little Mary was grateful to her dear father for letting her remain with her cousins, but her heart was at home, and when she was brought there, she rejoiced yet more."

In this state of heavenly calm her mild spirit continued for a few succeeding weeks, no fretfulness or impatience aggravating her illness.

Catching the holy resignation of the sainted sufferer, no complaint ever broke from the lips of her afflicted aunt; she was ready to yield up her child.—"For what," said she—"what is too great an offering to that bountiful Heaven which for eighteen years has blessed me with such an angel, and granted me to watch her last moments, and endeavour to imitate her sweet example?"

But Emily saw that she keenly felt the stroke, and sometimes wished that she might have been permitted to comfort and support the declining years of her who had been the tenderest of guardians to her motherless infancy. At times also, when any circumstance called forth the energies of her mind, or awakened her playful fancy, her anxious physician suspected that something of nervous or mental depression contributed to the extreme debility which alarmed him; if so, there might yet be hope, but a hope so precarious, that he dared not communicate it to Mrs. Nugent, lest it should only serve to embitter disappointment.

His idea that her internal feelings affected her outward frame was soon confirmed, but in a manner that almost destroyed the hope which had accompanied it; by the effect produced on her by the letter of Clanalvon.

On first sight of the well-known writing, her emotion was such, that she was with difficulty preserved from fainting. When a little recovered, she begged to be left alone with her aunt, and holding the yet-unopened letter in her hand, she said, in a tremulous tone, which struggled for composure—"I know what it contains; do not fear for me—it shall not make me vainly cling to life; happiness here can only raise my heart with still stronger gratitude to its Great Bestower. I shall be gratified to learn that he remembers past days. Do not—do not fear for me," she added, throwing her arms around her aunt.

Emily read the letter, and though at some passages her tears fell on the paper, her countenance retained its heavenly serenity unabated.—"I shall see him," she exclaimed, when she had finished, with one of those luminous smiles on which he had so often hung; "I shall see him—I know I shall; it is for that I have so long been spared. Ought I not to be grateful? Oh, aunt, how all contributes to my happiness! Perhaps he may be here to-morrow—perhaps this very day."

"No, my love," said Mrs. Nugent, intent on calming her perturbed spirits, "he will not leave home until he has had time to receive your prohibition, should you wish not to see him. You will see him, my love—you will be spared to see him again; but it is impossible that he should yet arrive."

Vain however were her precautions; she continued in a state of fluttered joy, starting, and changing colour at every sound, while a smile of sweet serenity would play on her features, with the delightful confidence that she would not die until she saw him.

Towards evening she sunk into long and repeated swoonings; and as doctor Selby thought on the horror of Mrs. Nugent's feelings, should she unexpectedly find her child a lifeless corpse in her arms, he felt it best to warn her, that he thought it probable, in one of these suspensions of the faculties, Emily's gentle spirit would take its flight.

For three succeeding days these faintings continued, with the intermission of five or six hours at a time, and in these intervals Emily conversed calmly, and did not appear much more debilitated than she had been.

On the morning of the twelfth of September, as she lay, weak and helpless, on a couch in the drawing-room, she turned to her aunt—"Do you know," she said, "this is the anniversary of his birth? he is twenty-three to-day. This day year we were just settled in Devonshire, and I was in all the agitation of that miserable summer. This day two years I was gaily dancing with him at Clanalvon Castle—happy in so many hopes; and this day I am on my journey home—happy, happy now, and expecting only joy hereafter and for ever."

As she spoke, and fervently clasping her weak hands, raised her eyes to heaven, Catherine Murphy entered, and said that her mistress was wanted.

"It is he, it is he!" said Emily, in a

low and indistinct voice, sinking back on the sofa.

Mrs. Nugent looked at her, and silently left the room.

With one arm he clasped his child to his breast, while the other was thrown round a pillar in the hall for support; his face was bent over the infant, and concealed from the sight of Mrs. Nugent.

Scarcely could she know, in the emaciated form, convulsed and quivering with mental agony, the graceful, agile, yet firm and dignified figure of the young earl of Clanalvon. She regarded him for a moment; she saw him no longer as the cruel deserter of her child; he was only remembered as the dear generous boy who had once been dearer to her than all the world, except her own Emily.—"Clanalvon," she kindly said, while her tears bedewed the hand she took, "dear, dear Clanalvon, will you not speak to your friend?"

"And are you my friend?—and does

she yet live," exclaimed he, wildly fixing his eyes upon her face.

"Be calm," she said; "she does live—she is willing to see you; but, alas——"

"I come to see her die," interrupted Clanalvon. "I bring this child to receive her dying blessing. I know it; and will she bless *my* child? can she forgive me? Oh, Mrs. Nugent, I have suffered much!"

"She is all forgiveness," said Mrs. Nugent. "Come to her, Clanalvon, and bring your dear infant to her; but do not, by your agony, disturb the last moments of my child. She loves you still, Clanalvon—truly she does."

He paused for a moment, then, with a violent effort over his feelings, desired to be led to her.

By every argument of reason and piety Emily had endeavoured to command her emotion at the idea of seeing him, and the sweet and holy serenity of her thoughts shone on her countenance as they entered.

Clanalvon gazed on the wasted form of

the once gay and beautiful Emily Nugent, with an intensity as if his soul were in his eyes. Suddenly advancing, he placed the child beside her, and, without speaking, was rushing from the apartment.

"Do not go," said Emily.

The voice so long unheard acted like magic on him. He stopped. Falling on his knees beside the sofa, he grasped her pallid hand, and tears, which he could not control, fell unrestrained upon it.

"This is not the composure you promised me, Clanalvon," said Mrs. Nugent; "calm your impetuous feelings, or she will be instantly destroyed."

"I will—I must be calm now," he exclaimed, rising; then collecting himself, he added—"I will leave her for a moment."

Emily clasped his hand, while eagerly, though with gasping breath, she said—"Return soon."

Without daring to look at her again, he went; and Emily sinking on the bosom of her aunt, for the first time since her illness, sobbed hysterically.—" It is joy, it is joy," she exclaimed, as Mrs. Nugent strained her to her heart.

" But not the calm peaceful joy of yesterday, my love," said the aunt.

" No, it is another kind of feeling; but still it is joy, it is thankfulness," said Emily, raising to heaven her eyes, which smiled through their tears.

After a few minutes he returned, with a gloomy forced composure on his countenance, which, though flushed before, was now pale as marble.

Emily extended to him her hand, with a look of former days. He slowly advanced.—" I am now calm," he said; " my impetuous feelings shall never hurt you more: were you to expire before my eyes, no tear or exclamation shall disturb you. There will be time enough for lamentations that will not reach your ear. I have been your murderer, Emily. I do not suffer more than I know I deserve; yet one favour I have to ask, to which, even in madness, I might turn for consolation. Tell me, Emily, do you love me still?"

"I do, Clanalvon," she replied, "dearly, tenderly love you. Oh! I would open all my heart to you, if I thought it would be a future comfort to you when I am gone."

"When you are gone, Emily, there is no future for me," he said, in the still monotonous voice with which he endeavoured to veil his feelings; never had his most animated accents of love sunk so deeply to the heart of Emily.

"Clanalvon," said Mrs. Nugent, who, as she supported her, felt the emotion his words excited in her trembling frame, "this is not real tenderness. What avails it to command your voice and manner, if you rend her heart by these expressions of agony?"

"Oh, aunt, forgive him!" said Emily, fondly laying her hand on his arm; "he suffers much, and tries to control his feelings. But, Clanalvon, dearest Clanalvon, my state is not hopeless yet. My dear physician says, that weakness is my most dangerous symptom, and I feel my strength revive in seeing you. See," added she, smiling, "I am able to raise this darling baby, and bid you press it to your heart, and find comfort in it, should you lose every other."

Again he lost all self-command, and sobbed audibly, and in uncontrolled agony, for several minutes; while Emily, exhausted by the exertion, rested in the arms of her aunt. At length she said— "Clanalvon, I am not doomed to death—it is probable, but not certain; but whatever the event may be, let us be prepared to meet it, not as the wild slaves of sensibility, but as the willing servants of an unerring Power, which afflicts only in mercy. Do not now forget in me the claims your mother, your infant, and poor Olivia, have on your care and tenderness: they cannot be happy, if you are miserable. I have much—much more to say," she added, in a feeble voice, sinking back on the sofa; "but I cannot."

Clanalvon's head had been bent on his hands in the stillness of agony, and he dared not now raise it.

"Look," said Mrs. Nugent, solemnly.

He raised his eyes. Never, in brightest days of human happiness, had such smiles beamed on the countenance of Emily as now illumined it; her whole face seemed glowing with the light of Heaven—her beatified spirit, not yet ascended, seemed hovering in smiles around her exhausted form. He gazed on her as he would have done on her disembodied spirit, had it, after death, appeared to him. Still, motionless, his eyes were fixed on hers, of which the holy glances turned from him to heaven, and from heaven to him.

Doctor Selby, who, since his usual hour of attendance, had been waiting in the adjoining room, now entered, and desired to be left alone with his patient and one female servant.

As Mrs. Nugent carried the infant from the room, she placed it in the arms of the sobbing Catherine Murphy, to save her from a scene for which she saw she was unfit; thus, in the deepest of all possible anguish, considerate of the feelings of others.

With a step, slow, solemn—scarcely like that of a living creature, Clanalvon reached the apartment which Mrs. Nugent entered, and for some minutes he remained standing in that intensity of anguish, under the weight of which distinctness of perception is almost lost in stupefaction.

A shriek from the adjoining apartment, echoed by the before-almost-palsied lips of Mrs. Nugent, awakened him from this lethargy of sorrow. He sunk on the ground—his brain became confused—he scarcely could recollect all the horror of the event which overpowered him.

Mrs. Nugent flew to him; the violent heaving of his breast alone proclaimed that life was not extinct.

A few minutes had thus elapsed, when

doctor Selby entered the room. So completely was all hope extinguished in Clanalvon's breast, that he felt no emotion in seeing him; Mrs. Nugent had not believed that she entertained a shadow of hope, yet her eyes turned on him with a look of inquiry, to which she dared not give utterance.

" She lives," said doctor Selby. " Her having survived so far gives some ground for hope of ultimate recovery; but do not fix your hearts on it too strenuously; be resigned, as is the angel-sufferer. She is now tranquil, but completely exhausted: her feelings must not be awakened. I must banish lord Clanalvon until she acquires a little strength."

" But if," faltered lord Clanalvon; " but if——"

The kind-hearted physician caught his meaning, and, taking his hand, he said—" If we are compelled to give up hope, there will be no more need of precaution."

With the faint hope these words conveyed, Clanalvon remained alone, while

Mrs. Nugent resumed her station at the side of her beloved invalid. She lay in deathlike languor, the sweet smile which occasionally played on her countenance being at times the only indication of existence; at others, her anxious attendants watched her breath, to see if she still lived. At length she sunk gradually into a calm and easy slumber, and doctor Selby having whispered to Mrs. Nugent his hope that she would awake from it revived, withdrew, to convey the same consolation to Clanalvon. The still torpor of hopeless anguish now dissolved in floods of tears, and the benevolent physician assuring him that she was in perfect safety for the present, prevailed on him to return to his mother, who, he had learned from the nurse who came for the child, was under extreme anxiety.

In a state of doubtful convalescence, Emily remained two days, before doctor Selby entertained any confidence of her eventful recovery—a period passed by Clanalvon in the most torturing state of fluctuating hopes and fears, without seeing her, the physician having strictly prohibited the slightest emotion. Even after the second day, when she had recovered sufficient strength to be conscious of what was passing round her, and to press the hand of her aunt with tenderness, he would not permit the exertion of speech; but once on that evening, she broke through the injunction of silence, by whispering to Mrs. Nugent (who had previously removed from her mind the painful impression Clanalvon's agony had left there, by telling her that her physician had given him all the consolation of hope)—" Tell him, dear aunt, that I wish to live."

The day following, doctor Selby asked her, could she, who had so long lived as though dead to this world, be resigned to remaining with her friends, as he saw every reason to expect she would do?

" Oh, more than resigned!" said Emily; " I am thankful for a life which I now hope may be valuable to many that are dear to me. Will my beloved aunt," she added, extending her hand to her, "forgive me, that I was so willing to leave her?"

"Oh, Emily," said Mrs. Nugent, "at that time, whenever I could for a moment banish all selfish feeling, I scarcely wished myself that you should live."

"I have been blessedly led on," said Emily, looking upward, after a pause; "when I was deprived of all my heart had principally fixed on here, I was spared the dreary prospect of a long and joyless life, and now when earthly blessings are richly poured upon me, I am restored to them. I lived *in* heaven then—I trust I shall live *for* heaven now."

Emily smiled; and with a sensation of sublimated joy, Mrs. Nugent observed in her own mind, that those smiles which a few days before she had regarded as the visions of hovering angels, ready to bear her pure spirit to heaven, now illumined her countenance, to cast a beam of heaven on worldly happiness; and that the child whom she had endeavoured to persuade herself to resign, as too holy for this life, was formed to be its chief blessing to all connected with her.

Emily, who, when doubtful of her recovery, had rather dreaded than wished to see Clanalvon, now requested of doctor Selby that he might be admitted, which her affectionate friend granted, on condition that not one word should be uttered on either side.

At the moment when her desire to see him was conveyed to Clanalvon, in an adjoining apartment, he was listening to the most minute accounts of her from Catherine, and eagerly endeavouring to distinguish her voice in conversation with doctor Selby. It were, indeed, impossible to describe his feelings, as, for several minutes, he held her hand in his, silently gazing on her countenance; at length, feeling a degree of emotion rising in his breast, which he feared would be visible to, and agitate her, he relinquished it, and, without having uttered a word, he left the room.—" I trust I am thankful to

Heaven," he said to Mrs. Nugent, who accompanied him to the door; then, fervently grasping her hand, he burst into tears of gratitude and tenderness, and hastily retired.

For the two following days Clanalvon was admitted in the same manner, to satisfy his anxiety—to judge himself of her appearance; and after this period doctor Selby told her that on his next visit she might speak to him.

He entered the room without knowing that the injunction was removed; she gave him her hand, and, smiling, said—"Clanalvon, I may now bless you, and ask you to bring your dear mother and baby to visit your friend, without risking the life I wish to preserve for you."

The heart-thrilling delight with which he heard the first tones of her voice, increased as he heard her mention his mother, in a manner so much more affectionate than his conscience told him she deserved; the mingled emotions of joy and admiration for a moment impeded his utterance; and when he spoke, the agitated transport of his words and manner drew on him the gentle admonitions of Mrs. Nugent, who desired that no subject interesting to the feelings of any of the party should be touched on; and after about half-an-hour of conversation, in which, under this restriction, each asked questions, rather from a wish to hear the voice of the other, than from any regard to the answers, they parted, with the promise, that if she continued so well, she should see lady Clanalvon and the little Emily Cecilia the following day.

Though possessed herself of a generous and forgiving spirit, lady Clanalvon dreaded, in the idea of meeting Emily, that however the piety and sweetness of her mind might make her forgive the unkindness she was conscious of towards her, yet that the remembrance of it would check that full and fond affection with which she had once loved and admired her; and notwithstanding the efforts of her son to drive the gloom from her brow, without appearing to perceive it, it was with painful and agitated feelings she accompanied him on the visit; but when they reached the apartment where Emily lay, the smile with which she raised herself, to embrace lady Clanalvon, spoke far more than forgiveness—it expressed an utter oblivion of all that required it.

Lady Clanalvon, deeply touched by the altered looks and affectionate manner of Emily, threw her arms around her, calling her the dear, adopted child of her heart, and then wept over her in silence.

Emily chiefly mentioned her illness to speak of the rapidity of her recovery, and seemed no longer to recollect that lady Clanalvon had ever been other than a second parent to her; but all Mrs. Nugent's efforts, for the sake of her niece, to banish painful remembrance of the past, failed to give to her manner towards lady Clanalvon the benign sweetness it in general so peculiarly possessed, and this, after the first agitation of meeting Emily was over, lady Clanalvon felt.

When she was going, Mrs. Nugent left the room with her.—" I perceived," she said, " that you were greatly shocked at first sight of my poor child."

" I was indeed," replied lady Clanalvon. " Oh, my dear Mrs. Nugent, I did not expect to find her so sadly changed !"

" Yet you could not expect," said the aunt, " to meet again the same beautiful, fascinating Emily which affliction found her."

" Truly !" exclaimed lady Clanalvon, with renewed tears; " I, who have seen my own bright Olivia fade under its blighting influence, could not expect that sorrow would leave uninjured a creature of such sensibility—such feeling, as Emily Nugent."

All Mrs. Nugent's coldness vanished, and, taking her hand, she kindly said— " My dear friend, I trust you will yet see your sweet Olivia raised, as it were from the dead, as I have seen my Emily."

In the next day's visit Emily ventured to make inquiries respecting Olivia, and expressed her anxious wish once more to see her and Elizabeth.—" Oh," she said, " when I thought myself going, I sometimes believed that I loved my friends too little, I felt such unbroken happiness in the idea of death! but now I feel my heart glow with new affection towards them, as if I had never loved till now. I cannot feel my happiness perfectly complete, until Lizzy, Charles, and my dear Olivia, are with me. Olivia never—never forgot me!"

Lady Clanalvon bent her head at the unintended reproach, and her son, checking a sigh, replied—" Never, indeed! and it was your letter, Emily, written to console Olivia for her loss, which first raised me from despondence sufficiently to enable me to seek the happiness I found."

" It was that letter, angel Emily," said lady Clanalvon, " which restored the wandering reason of my darling child."

Emily smiled, and timidly said—" The writer of that letter was the happy instrument which Heaven used to work its gracious purpose."

Though her strength was so far recovered as to leave no present fear, doctor Selby was uneasy, lest the repeated agitation at every time she saw Clanalvon, should impede the progress of her recovery, and thought that his absence for a few weeks would be advisable; he also thought that it was necessary to the re-establishment of her health, that she should remain in the mild climate of Devonshire, and under his immediate care, for the ensuing winter; and as lady Clanalvon, as well as her son, was determined not to return, for any time, to Ireland without her, it was agreed that Clanalvon should go there, to bring Olivia to her ever-dear friend, when all should settle in Devonshire until the next summer, when they were to proceed to Clanalvon Castle.

Long used to affliction, he felt, at the moment of leaving his so newly-found happiness, a kind of dread that it would vanish "like fairy gifts melting away;" but the daily letters of either his mother or Mrs. Nugent, assuring him of Emily's continuing recovery, banished the unfounded fear; and when Olivia met her brother, she smiled to observe that his animated countenance had regained somewhat of its former brilliancy. Her own appearance, though sadly different from what it had been one year before, was greatly better than when he had last seen her. Her attachment to Howard's memory was unabated, but she had learned, as a duty, to seek enjoyment in other things.—"I shall be quite happy, my dearest brother," she said, smiling, the day of his arrival. "I never can know the kind of affection *he* possessed; but I can love you, my darling Emily, mamma, Lizzy, my little niece, and dear kind Charles; and in seeing you all happy, I shall be so—and I know Emily will make me feel as if I contributed to the general felicity."

"And you will do so," said Clanalvon; "she said she could not feel her happiness perfect until you shared it. But, dearest Olivia, among those who have a claim on your affection, surely you cannot forget lord O'Donnell, who, as a friend, has participated in all your affliction, with as much tenderness as I could have done."

"Few," she replied, "have so high a place in my esteem and gratitude, and his happiness is one of the objects of my dearest wishes."

"There is but one way of promoting it," thought her brother, but he felt it was too soon to speak to her on the subject.

His long absence from home, and his continued uneasiness of mind, had left a great arrear of business, which, on first going, Clanalvon hoped might be accomplished in a few days; but by various unavoidable delays, it was prolonged until the weather was so severe, as to make a long journey, and a sea voyage, an undertaking too great for the delicate health of Olivia; and with a disinterested consideration, very different from the impetuosity of his former character, he determined to wait for her until a more safe time of year. Formerly his imagination would have represented to him that the feelings of Emily would be wounded, her health perhaps injured, by his delay, and, in his zeal to prevent these evils, would have overlooked the tender caution which the enfeebled health and spirits of his sister required; now he viewed things in a more rational light, and looked to the approving smile of Emily, as a sweet reward for the sacrifice love had made to fraternal care.

To spare Olivia the pain of feeling herself a restraint on him, he did not let her know that his business was so far arranged as to permit his departure; and frequently during the many hours they now spent together, he drew her from melancholy contemplations, by engaging her in interesting conversation, and sometimes even led her to something of her former playfulness.

Montague and lady Elizabeth, who had remained in town with her, on account of lady Clanalvon's necessary absence, a few days after the arrival of their brother, left her entirely to his care; but they did not return to their own home until they had had the happiness of observing the improvement renovated hope had made on his appearance, and the beneficial effect of that improvement on the spirits of their drooping sister.

In a will made before Clanalvon's illness, Cecilia had left the entire of her large property to him, but, with feelings of tender gratitude, Clanalvon now arranged that half should be yearly laid up for her daughter, and half during his life, after which the whole was to descend to the child, dedicated to those purposes of charity of which he had heard her speak with most approbation.

Now that his mind was calmed respecting Emily, many endearing recollections of Cecilia often called forth a sigh of regret for her unhappy fate, which, with exultation in the excellence of his Emily, he felt would rather receive her approbation, than pain her affection. Cecilia's gentle disposition and ardent attachment had indeed won his grateful fondness. He knew her faults; but he felt her virtues, and without one sentiment of idolizing love straying from his perfect Emily, he could sigh with pitying remembrance of the sweetness and unhappiness of Cecilia.

The winter happened to be remarkably severe, heavy snows falling until the end of January; and the determination of remaining with Olivia was almost overcome by his excessive impatience to be with Emily, and to see in his child that improvement on which she dwelt with delight in every letter. He had, however, learned not to sacrifice others to the indulgence of his own feelings; he saw that Emily was made happy in his absence, by a consciousness that it was prolonged by the fulfilment of duties; and it was not until the beginning of March that, with Olivia, he left Dublin to return to Devonshire.

The pleasure with which she looked forward to her stay there, enabled her, without injury, to bear the journey, the fatigues of which were lightened by every tender attention in her fond and considerate brother, who, eagerly as his heart panted for the conclusion of his journey, frequently retarded it, when she would have been willing to exert herself, for his sake, lest another stage should be too much for her.

It was dark when they reached Mrs. Nugent's seat; but as the chariot drove up the avenue, it was heard by the inmates; and Emily was of the group who ran out to welcome them. The dye of health was beginning to glow on her cheek; her eyes sparkled as they had formerly done; and her light step had regained its elastic firmness.

Olivia did not interrupt the rapture with which Clanalvon regarded her, by once betraying the agitation she felt in seeing the Nugents for the first time since the death of Robert; she even delighted her mother and Emily by one of her former smiles, as she threw herself from the embrace of one to that of the other.

"Where is my child?" said Clanalvon, looking round when he entered the drawing-room, still holding the hand of Emily. "She only is wanting."

Alike anxious to shew her little favourite to her father, and to engage the attention of her dear Olivia, whose thoughts she justly guessed were fixed on one sad image, however her kind consideration for others might make her wish to conceal it, Emily flew for the infant, and immediately returned with it, still sleeping, in her arms. She placed it in those of its father, and called on Olivia to observe it.

Olivia fondly caressed it, and exclaimed —"Oh, how like her forehead is to Cecilia's!"

"It is indeed," said Emily, with a smothered sigh, and kissing it.

A few days spent in Devonshire served

to convince Clanalvon that all anxiety about Emily might now be at an end; and necessary arrangements with his agents calling him to the estates of Cecilia, which lay in a distant part of England, he then left them once more, to terminate, he hoped, the last business which would ever force him from them. Fresh delays here detained him, so that the month of May had commenced before he was enabled to return to the long-extinguished smiles of Emily.

The intermediate time had served to increase, if possible, the mutual attachment of Olivia and Emily, and to convince lady Clanalvon, that in Emily she would find a third, and, she sometimes thought, a favourite daughter.

The little Emily Cecilia had completed her first year, and holding the hands of Emily and Olivia, walked out to receive her father on his return. By Emily she had been taught to pronounce the word "papa;" and never did mother more exultingly enjoy the improvement of her own child, than did Emily the increasing beauty and endearment of the motherless baby.

Far from feeling pain that Clanalvon should tenderly remember Cecilia, Emily would have felt him wanting in gratitude towards her for her devoted attachment, had she not observed, that his lovely child was dearer to him from the likeness she bore her mother; and Emily herself, besides the attachment to an affectionate and endearing infant natural to an amiable mind, loved her, as Cecilia had said, for her mother's, as well as her father's sake.

As a just testimony of respect to the memory of Cecilia, it was determined that the union of Clanalvon and Emily should not take place until two years after her decease; in the meantime they frequently amused themselves with arranging plans for their future life. It was agreed that lady Clanalvon and Mrs. Nugent should always continue to reside with them, and that Olivia should consider Clanalvon

Castle her home, as the frequent visits there, promised by Charles and Elizabeth, would prevent the pain of a separation from them.

With cheerful pleasure they looked forward to their return to the neighbourhood which had, for several years, been equally that of the two families, and where they hoped to renew their intimacy with many estimable friends, and agreeable acquaintance. They also offered many inducements to doctor Selby to add his family to the number of both.

It had long been Clanalvon's opinion, that in the present state of these countries, an Irish nobleman, of large fortune, could be of more effectual benefit to his country, by improving the situation and habits of his own tenantry and neighbourhood, than by engaging in the doubtful intricacies of politics; to their home therefore all their views were directed. Various institutions were planned, and lines of superintendence marked out for each member of the family, carefully selecting for Olivia those offices which, by interesting her feelings, were most calculated to remove that sense of desolation with which youth looks back to its blighted hopes.

Through all their arrangements, Emily frequently appealed to the judgment and taste of lady Clanalvon, as if she had been still mistress of her son's house, and looked with the humility of a child to the enlightened and experienced counsels of her beloved aunt.

The recollection of his early errors, which his excessive sensibility aggravated into crimes of the blackest hue, alone clouded the happiness of Clanalvon.— "Oh, Emily," said he, one day, when he was alone with her, "Olivia's looks distract me! How different was the soul-cheering influence of her sunny smiles, from the sickly gleam of doubtful pleasure which now plays on her lips! Poor Robert too, who once hung with such delight on those smiles, cold in the grave! Is it not distracting to a brother's heart, to think that I—I, so beloved by both, have caused all this?"

"Dearest Clanalvon," replied Emily, "you have nothing to reproach yourself with, in respect to your fellow-creatures: on every occasion you have acted as kindness and benevolence seemed to dictate; but in your benevolence you have followed a blind, inadequate guide; in the excess of feeling for the object which pressed on your ever kind and open heart, you forgot the perfect justice which principle requires; in your kind generous wish to withdraw lord Belville from sin, you made him your constant companion, forgetting the injustice towards those who might be led to follow his steps, as your chosen friend."

"Poor, poor Howard!" exclaimed Clanalvon.

Emily continued—"Turn not to the right hand or to the left; there is a certain path, from which, if we stray, even to do what, to our weak conceptions, seems more noble, we must be wrong. This beautiful path, which guards us from that excessive sensibility towards one object, which excludes others from their just share of our care, the light of religion illumines. Religion's holy beams fix on it alone—their lustre glances not to one side or the other. Your friend now feels," raising her beautiful eyes to heaven; "that your heart was always full of kindness and tenderness towards him; so indeed it has ever been towards all creatures."

"It has," said Clanalvon. "Yet how many have I injured!"

"Some have suffered by you," said Emily, with a smile of former playfulness; "but, as poor Mrs. Fagan once said, 'it was only your lordship's goodness done it.' Seriously some have suffered by you, and through the very kindness of your feelings towards them; as to serve one interesting individual, you have sometimes forgotten the injury done the many, so, in respect to the individual, to gratify one feeling which particularly touched you, you have too often overlooked the general good of the object of your benevolence."

"I understand my Emily," said Clanalvon; "her own example illustrates her lesson. At this moment the indulgence you at once so kindly commend, and so tenderly reprove in me, would prompt your heart to soothe and flatter mine, by blinding me to my own failings; but that more exalted benevolence from which justice is inseparable, leads you to point them out, in order to correct them."

Emily turned on him her eyes, in which the very purity of truth and candour seemed to reign; and putting her hand in his, she said—"I have enough of the weakness I would reprove to have spared you this lecture, did I not know your noble nature sufficiently, to be well aware that by it I should not cast one cloud over your dear affection; but the noblest dispositions, the highest intentions of rectitude, will not suffice to awake benevolence in a heart naturally cold, or to guide it aright in one of kindlier mould; for this we must look to a higher Power—it is only by constant intercourse with Heaven—it is only by keeping eternity so habitually in view, as to connect with every fleeting moment, every passing incident of this transient life, that we can be enabled to combine justice and benevolence together, in the fullest extent of each, without ever suffering the one to trespass on the other."

Thus did she calm the bitterness of his feelings, and guide him to that healing penitence which, in leading the heart to the only source of good, effaces the very errors it laments. The life of holy communion she described was hers. Heaven seemed to mingle in all her concerns for herself and others; eternity seemed linked with time in all her thoughts and views; her pure spirit seemed to dwell in a region high above the petty vexations, contentions, and competitions of this life, and to be bound to earth only by the ties of affection and benevolence; like the daughter of Jairus, who, after having caught a glance of the heavenly glories, was recalled, in pity to the sorrows of her afflicted parents.

THE

HEIRESS OF CASTLEBROOK;

OR,

FAMILY PRIDE.

A Tale founded on Fact.

To give society its highest taste;
Well-ordered home, man's best delight to make;
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
With every gentle, care-eluding art,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life—
This be the female dignity and praise.
THOMSON.

THE

Heiress of Castlebrook.

PROUDLY did the haughty breast of lady Augusta Delamore swell in the triumphant consciousness of beauty, as she cast a last glance on her mirror, preparing to descend to the apartments where she would be the magnet of universal attraction. Her nurse sighed as she looked at her.

"Why do you sigh, Morton?" asked her young lady, kindly.

"I thought, madam, of poor Mr. Villars. What would he say, if he saw you to-day?"

A higher blush mantled on her cheek, as, suppressing a struggling sigh, she haughtily said—"This is a subject, Morton, on which I wish you rather to remember your real situation, than to speak with the freedom which on all others I admit from you."

The unhappy passion of Villars was at that moment an unwelcome intruder on her thoughts. As she descended the staircase, she smiled at the idea of the approaching meeting with her cousin lord Harcourt. She remembered, when they had been last together, his almost-rude neglect of her, and unconcealed preference of hounds, horses, and the old blind fidler; and now she exulted in the approaching triumph of her charms over his indifference; she remembered the glory with which military renown had adorned his name since their parting, and the expected triumph became grateful to higher feelings than those of vanity. Curiosity to see the rough unmannered schoolboy, transformed into the far-famed hero, and the polished gentleman, mingled something of archness with the dignified expression of her countenance, as she opened the drawing-room door.

Lord Harcourt started with surprise on her entrance, and as he advanced towards her, he exclaimed—"Can this really be lady Augusta?"

"It is," replied her father, piqued by an observation which seemed to cast an imputation on her former promise of loveliness. "Did you expect to see her still but twelve years old?"

"No," said lord Harcourt, colouring; "but so grown, so improved, so——"

He stopped, not knowing what farther to say; he was aware that it is unpolite to tell a lady, in direct terms, that she is beautiful; and he was not in sufficient habits of intimacy with the sex to imply this opinion without saying it. His manner, however, had implied it more effectually than the best-turned compliment could have done—father, mother, and daughter, perceived all that he felt, and more than he felt, of the power of his cousin's beauty, and she graciously intimated her remembrance of former acquaintance, by observing that he was as much grown as she could be.

In France lord Harcourt had learned to consider women rather as objects of admiration than of friendly intercourse—rather as idols to be worshipped than companions to be loved and confided in. Marriage had never formed part in his plans of happiness; he did not regard woman in the endearing light of the partner of the heart—the softener of affliction—the sharer of felicity—the tender partaker of every feeling; and he felt repugnant to a state which would render his comfort subservient to the caprices of a being who, while incapable of the free communion of mind with mind, the kindly intercourse of feeling in which he delighted, would feel neglected and unkindly treated, if he did not give them up to become her adorer.

On his return to England, however, he found that his father had set his heart on seeing him the husband of the beautiful heiress of the illustrious earldom of Castlebrook. This title was among the few that descend in the female line; the present earl had neither brother or sister, and of several children born to him, not one had survived but lady Augusta, who was perfectly free from the constitutional delicacy which had sent so many of her little predecessors to an early grave. The mother of lord Harcourt, now deceased, was the only first cousin of lord Castlebrook, so that her son stood next in the succession to lady Augusta.

Lord Castlebrook, feeling that the death of four children, all of complaints nearly similar, had given the family of lord Ennerdale such strong grounds to expect a continuance of the same fatality, considered it almost an act of justice to bestow on lord Harcourt his daughter, with the coronet and estates, which she, contrary to all probability, had lived to deprive him of in his own right; and in the same opinion his lady more than acquiesced; she seemed as ardently desirous to promote the marriage, as if she could have imagined herself liable to reproach for having unexpectedly reared one child out of a number born for the grave.

Lord Harcourt at first expressed his extreme unwillingness to enter into the matrimonial state; but as his father pressed it anxiously, as he knew it was a desire with which he must at some period comply, and as he understood lady Augusta Delamore to be more deserving of the homage she required than most other women, he soon consented to become her suitor, and set off for Castlebrook.

He was now struck by her dazzling beauty, admired the graceful dignity of her manner, and the lofty majesty of her mien; and ere he retired to rest, he wrote to inform his father that, could he love lady Augusta as much as he admired her, he should no longer dread his union with her.—"But still," he added, "she is a woman. I never saw one so lovely; but she is a woman—she must be the object of every thing; a glance turned on another—even her father or his spaniel, brings a frown to her beautiful brow; the slightest inattention some sarcasm from her lips. While I thought only of her, I found her charming; but the moment I looked away, I was reminded that she is a woman. However, she very good-humouredly chatted with me, notwithstanding my utter inability to carry on the strain of compliment to which she has been accustomed. I felt much embarrassed under my new character of a lover, but got off altogether better than I expected.

"For domestic happiness she seems as little fitted as the rest of her beautiful self-adoring sex; she can never be what you describe my mother to have been, or what her lovely mother is, though even she has not the ardour of domestic affection which I should conceive the source of happiness in marriage, but rather seems to love her daughter with pride than fondness. Lady Augusta is a woman who will politely and gracefully receive my friends, and will not, as I feared, prevent my intercourse with them. Indeed I hope I shall not make so great a sacrifice in obeying my dear father as I apprehended."

During breakfast next morning, lord Harcourt still "got off" better than he could have hoped; but soon after, conceiving the morning hours at his own disposal, he retired to the library, and there, fascinated by the book he had taken up, he continued, forgetful of love, lady Augusta, and all the pomp of Castlebrook, until lady Augusta herself entered, to seek some favourite author. Harcourt sprung from his seat, and asked, had he long been there?

"I really cannot inform your lordship," she haughtily replied; "but I am very happy that Castlebrook contains *something* capable of giving you pleasure."

Harcourt felt confused, and his expressive countenance reflected every feeling.

His fair cousin smiled.—"I wished to ask another question of lord Harcourt," she said—"May I inquire how long was your residence among the Hottentots, in which you so well acquired their habits?"

Lord Harcourt, whose ideas of a lover's proper devotion were very high, felt that he indeed deserved reproof, and blushing deeply, not knowing what to say, yet feeling silence rude, exclaimed, as she approached the bookcases—"Do you read, lady Augusta?"

"Yes," she replied; "you thought, I suppose, that I was one of your favourite ladies—a Hottentot Venus perhaps?" and she glanced her bright eyes on a mirror near.

"A Venus of the fabled bards of old,"

thought Harcourt; but fearful of farther offending, he was silent.

Gracefully curtseying as she passed him, lady Augusta left the room. A new excitement was now given to render her yet more desirous to make lord Harcourt her captive; she saw that his ideas of women were low, and determined to be the person to raise them; but vanity, with its usual blinding effect, prevented her discerning the true means of engaging a heart which her virtues might have won, but which turned away, pained and dazzled by the coquettish brilliancy with which she endeavoured to subdue rather than attach it. We may admire, but we can never love the person in whose society we feel admiration more called on than the heart.

Lady Augusta saw that her cousin admired her beauty and her talents, and she determined he should adore them. Adorned by taste, and glowing in elated vanity, she again met him.

Never, he thought, had he seen any

thing so beautiful;' but the awkwardness he felt in the necessity he conceived himself under of telling her so, prevented his feeling the full force of her attractions; and when after dinner he forgot his duty, so far as to enter on a political discussion with her father, he felt all his terrors of his present situation realized, in the frown which clouded her fair brow.

It was a subject on which, alone with her father and his contemporary associates, lady Augusta could have entered with animated pleasure—on which she could have displayed all the powers of her flowing eloquence—all the brilliancy of her varied talents—all the energy of her patriotic heart; nay, more, it was a subject she would very probably have chosen to display them to lord Harcourt; but it had already been started—he had already shewed his lively interest in it, both as a statesman and a Briton, and she felt that her triumph would be but half complete, if she joined in the pursuit he had chosen for himself, instead of leading him to those she should point out; she would have preferred bending her lofty mind to the discussion of a lap-dog, or a head-dress, to receiving from him information on the subjects she most enjoyed, unless that information was offered expressly for her gratification; but if he seemed disposed to trifle, then indeed some remark was ready to turn the conversation to a higher channel, and make him blush for his childish levity. The devoted attachment she sought to excite she had once inspired, and she determined to inspire it again, in one more suited to her rank.

Lord Harcourt retired for the night, hating women more than ever, yet still admiring lady Augusta as the brightest ornament of the sex.

The next morning he, with lord Castlebrook, was to attend her on a ride, to visit some part of the estate, about two miles distant, which was now planting.

Lady Augusta was in high spirits; she saw that Harcourt felt the full brilliancy of her charms, and she forcibly banished every recollection which might have made her less happy in the conquest of her noble and universally-admired suitor; she would not think on the faded cheek, the wasted form of George Villars, for she was well aware that she could not think of them without feelings very different from those she now wished to rule her breast; and if, as she pointed out to her prosperous lover the scenes on which George had lingered, because they had been visited by her, one sigh swelled her bosom, she checked it as a trespass against the dignity of her name and station.

Harcourt admired and felt gratified by her manner to the labourers they addressed; there her kindness could be only graceful condescension, and lady Augusta, cold and supercilious to those in the higher ranks, yet beneath her own, was to them cordial and conciliating. He felt during this ride more ease in paying the homage she required than he had yet done; but many melancholy reflections crossed his mind, on the want of real confiding friendship in the future partner of his life. It was impossible to imagine the proud form of Augusta cradling in her bosom her sleeping babe—her majestic step treading with soft and cautious movement in the chamber of sickness—her brilliant manners and pointed wit relaxed into the cheerful softness of the domestic fireside—her lofty spirit stooping to the thousand fond cares and minute attentions calculated, "well-ordered home man's best delight to make." But Harcourt had never seen the woman who realized these ideas, and lady Augusta was the loveliest of all who did not; she might be the pride and ornament of his life, in its more conspicuous moments, and would not, he hoped, deprive its more retired scenes of any comforts they now possessed. Harcourt had read of wedded felicity, and hung with rapture over the page, until he cast it away, with the painful consideration, that it was but fiction—that such scenes had never really blessed human life, and far, far was lady Augusta from changing this idea.

Such reflections painfully mingled with his other sentiments towards her, as he rode by her side, admiring the graceful ease with which she managed her fiery steed, and listening to the eloquence with which she spoke of the beauties of nature now surrounding them.

All the feelings of tenderness, however, with which she could inspire him, were fully awakened, when, as they advanced in single file through a narrow hedged lane, the horse of lady Augusta suddenly plunged, and threw her.

The two gentlemen were instantly at her side, and raising her in their arms, they found her senseless, blood flowing profusely from a wound in the forehead.

Harcourt, from his admiration of her attractions, and his idea that women were a species of beings to pass through life unsuffering and unannoyed, hung over her in almost equal agony with her terrified father.

A servant was dispatched for a surgeon, and another desired to find out the nearest place to which she could be conveyed.

"I can tell you," said the boy who, by suddenly springing from the hedge, had, inadvertently, caused the accident; "bring her to Mrs. Mandeville's, for they cure every body."

Harcourt, bearing her in his arms, and her father, too much agitated to walk without the assistance of a servant, were about to follow his guidance, when a young lady, attracted by the sounds of distress, entered the lane, and desired they would bring the sufferer to the cottage, from which they were only separated by its lawn.

"That is Miss Mandeville," said the child, "and she will make her well."

The agonies of lord Castlebrook soon announced the father. The young stranger seemed deeply to feel them, and soothed him with all the consolations usual on such occasions, in assurances that it was evident, from Augusta's appearance, that the injury was not material.

They were soon within a few steps of the cottage. Miss Mandeville ran on before them, fearful, as she said, that her mother might be alarmed by the sudden appearance of so many strangers in such a situation.

Mrs. Mandeville then appeared; she was a woman of commanding height and graceful form, with remains of distinguished beauty, though both face and figure were injured by extreme thinness, and the languor of ill-health. Her start, her exclamation, the quick change of her colour, as her eye first fell on the pale features of lady Augusta, filled the father and lord Harcourt with alarm that she perceived some dangerous symptom.

She calmed their apprehensions, however, and with tender solicitude assisted in placing lady Augusta on a sofa, and applying those remedies which Harcourt, who was too benevolent not to have learned in his profession a familiarity with wounds and bruises, thought expedient, until the arrival of the surgeon. He set her father's mind at ease, by assuring him that she had received no material injury, though the shake to her whole frame might affect her a few days; and having bled her, he desired that she should be kept perfectly tranquil until evening, when he proposed seeing her again.

Mrs. Mandeville then advised that she should be put to bed, in which lady August coinciding, she retired for the purpose, with the mother and daughter.

Miss Mandeville soon returned, to inform her anxious friends, who had been invited to remain at the cottage until the surgeon's next visit, that lady Augusta, though universally shaken and bruised, seemed perfectly composed, and inclined to rest.

"I hope," said lord Castlebrook, smiling, "my daughter will long have reason to rejoice in this accident, as the introduction to so sweet an acquaintance; and now, Harcourt, will you ride home, to tell lady Castlebrook that your cousin is in the kindest hands, and will do well?"

Miss Mandeville blushed deeply; and as she retreated a few steps from the spot where she had stood by lord Harcourt, her eyes sought the ground, then raised themselves timidly, rested on his face for a moment, and with yet higher blushes were withdrawn.—"I have not the honour of knowing any of lord Harcourt's connexions," she said, timidly, in answer to the glance of inquiry which both cast on each other and on her; "but we have read much of him: my father was an officer, and the honour of the British army is dear to us."

Lord Harcourt blushed and smiled, and, for the first time in his life, received a compliment from a young and lovely woman, without racking his invention to return it; here he instinctively felt, that had it risen to his lips, it must be suppressed.

Soon recovering her embarrassment,

Miss Mandeville delivered a message from her mother, requesting that lady Castlebrook would dine at the cottage, that she might have the satisfaction of being near her daughter without inconvenience. The words were polite and smooth as courtesy could make them; but there was something in the tone and manner that brought a glow of confusion to the face of lord Castlebrook, by reminding him that the Mandevilles had been in the neighbourhood for many years, without receiving the smallest notice from his family.

He was surprised by the graceful manners and polished address of his hostesses, and still more so when he observed that the reception of so many noble guests made no commotion in the cottage; there was no forced passiveness that affected to say that such visitors made no addition to their usual board, nor no bustle that betrayed that such additions were unusual.

Though retired and timid, the manners of Miss Mandeville were perfectly free from that awkwardness which always attends the bashfulness of those who struggle against it, in a desire to appear to advantage: she seemed diffident of offering her opinions, but it was of herself she was diffident, not of the noble stranger. There was nothing in her manner which indicated a desire to grapple at a high acquaintance, though there was much which spoke her pleased by his appearance and conversation. She said she felt quite ashamed of herself, for having drawn lord Harcourt's attention by her manner on hearing his name; but that she had often wished to see the hero whose just fame had spread so far, and was embarrassed to find that she had been speaking to him with the familiarity into which the confusion had surprised her.

This naturally led the conversation to the important public objects in which his laurelled sword had been engaged; and lord Castlebrook was surprised at the intelligent interest his young and simple companion seemed to feel in them, and at the sound sense of the few observations she uttered, though they were never more than politeness rendered necessary, to save her guest from the awkward predicament of having the whole discussion left on his own hands.

As he gazed on her fair form and features, lord Castlebrook thought it must have been the agitation of the dreadful moment in which he first saw her, had prevented his being struck by them; but, in fact, the beauty of Louisa Mandeville was rather calculated to please the eye that rested on it, than to strike at first sight.

Her figure had scarcely attained to what is usually termed middle size, but the exquisitely-rounded slightness of her form, and the delicate proportion of her limbs, gave her the effect of miniature height; though not tall, she was well-made. Her features were decidedly pretty; though minute, her dark blue eyes, and her ever-varying colour, alike seemed to reflect every feeling. The general expression of her countenance was that of tranquil happiness and playful vivacity; her beauty never commanded attention or admiration; but when the former was casually called to it, it always met the latter: her wish was rather to win affection than praise, and in this she was usually gratified, for whoever admired her enough to observe her character, invariably loved it. An air of softness and timidity reigned over her whole face and person, which aided their minuteness in shading them from general observation; she looked as if one glance or word of reproof or disapprobation could blight her in a moment; she seemed to be a creature rather to be cherished in the maternal bosom, than exposed even to the admiration of the world in general.

Lord Castlebrook was far from thinking her the most beautiful or most fascinating of women; but he saw that she was lovely, and in every look, every tone, every word she uttered, he felt that she was well-tempered, unsophisticated, playful, and endearing, and possessed in no small degree that most uncommon of all qualities, common sense. To this the pure integrity of her heart, and the undeviating rectitude of her principles, powerfully contributed; always wishing to follow the right path, she never warped her reason by efforts to bind it to the side of inclination. Never was the spirit of the precept, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," more fully impressed on any heart than hers; she invariably saw all the concerns, the interests, the feelings of others, in the same point of view as her own, and weighed the one in the same balance, and with the same measure, as the other.

When the carriage of lady Castlebrook stopped at the cottage-door, the good-natured solicitude with which Miss Mandeville hastened to meet her, to relieve the fears of an anxious mother, was sensibly different from the *empressement* with which the same might have been done to engage the notice and thanks of the peeress. Louisa's countenance so sweetly corroborated the words she uttered, that no one could imagine, for any thing she said or did, any other reason, any other motive, than that which was ostensible.

Lady Augusta was so much recovered by the time of her mother's arrival, that her wish to join the circle after dinner was complied with; the haughty superciliousness which had prevented her visiting the Mandevilles, as "people who would conceive themselves on a certain kind of equality," was now wholly overcome by the emotions of gratitude, and she permitted to strengthen in her bosom the strong partiality she had conceived for Mrs. Mandeville and her daughter; but Louisa's modest pride, with the remembrance of the neglect they had met with from the family, induced her to endeavour to conceal the interest and admiration which the graceful and endearing manners, and the soft melancholy of lady Castlebrook, had excited in her bosom, though no feeling of this kind checked the cordiality of her watchful attentions to the sufferer.

Lord Harcourt soon began to make the same discovery as lord Castlebrook had her desire to prolong her stay; she would have been sorry to acknowledge to herself that the recollection of George Villars's intimacy with them, and anxiety to know whether he would come to inquire for her, had been the chief cause of this desire—she would have been sorry to acknowledge to herself the cause of the many changes of colour which Mrs. Mandeville noticed with alarm; nor was she fully sensible of the cause of her close inquiries about Louisa's friends in the neighbourhood—who she visited—who she liked—who she saw most frequently, &c.; but Louisa understood it, and felt indignant that she should be solicitous about the love, while she scorned the lover.—"Was it possible," thought this pure and unsophisticated mind, "that any one should triumph in being the source of unhappiness to another?"

A long silence had followed this feeling, when suddenly rising, while her speaking countenance expressed the most pitying emotion, Louisa exclaimed—"Mamma, poor George Villars is coming!"

"Meet him, my love," said Mrs. Mandeville, glancing her eye on lady Augusta.

Villars had not, until this moment, heard of the accident, which, from the exaggerated accounts he had received, seemed to threaten the life of the object of his hopeless attachment, and instantly he flew to the house of his friends, where he understood she had been conveyed; the moment his eye fell on Louisa's face, he exclaimed—"It is then true, Louisa—she dies!"

"No," answered Louisa; "believe me, dear George, whatever in my look led you to such an idea, was caused by sympathy for you, not her. She is almost well, and you had better not see her."

But vain was all she could say; with the vehemence natural to his character, he persisted, that unless she permitted him to judge for himself, all her assurances would not persuade him that lady Augusta was in safety.

Her spirits subdued by suffering, and her feelings softened by his violent agitation, lady Augusta could not command the cold distance of manner with which she endeavoured to receive him; and George left her with feelings which completely counteracted all the little progress his friends had made, in the charitable work of rousing his mind to some exertion, against the fatal enchantment which was at once undermining his health, and destroying all his prospects in life.

He was the only child of a clergyman, who, having no jointure or means of support to bequeath to his wife, looked to his rising talents as the prop and glory of her declining years, and to become so had been the fondest wish of George's ardent heart; to it he had sacrificed his passion for poetry, to bestow his time more exclusively on the study of the law; to it all his tastes and pleasures had been subservient; and George was all the fond hearts of his parents—all the best wishes of his friends, could desire, when the return of the Castlebrook family to this their principal estate, brought to his eyes the magic beauty of lady Augusta Delamore; her personal charms captivated his romantic imagination, and the kindness with which lord Castlebrook thought it incumbent on him to treat the family of the rector, gave him the opportunity of increasing his fascination, by the power of her talents, and the brilliancy of her conversation; and many evenings of enthusiastic rapture were followed by nights of feverish anguish, in which he viewed with despair the obscurity of his own situation, which placed him, as he felt, almost beneath the eye of lady Augusta; yet that eye, he thought, had sometimes turned on him with complacency, when he hung over her harp with silent ecstacy, or illustrated her remarks by apt quotations; but it had also pierced his heart with glances of haughty, indignant repulse, when by looks and trembling assiduities he had betrayed the passion which his tongue had never dared to utter.

All his studies, all his more solid pursuits, were now abandoned; and if some bright visions of ambitious hope led him occasionally to resume them, he found the spring of his mind utterly broken, and his wandering thoughts incapable of fixing on the objects to which he wished to direct them.

Of all his feelings, Louisa Mandeville was the sympathizing confidante: having no sisters of his own, he had conceived for her all the fond affection of a brother; and with a sister's kindness, Louisa had heard the tale of all his hopes and fears, and endeavoured to sooth his distracted mind; but though, when she saw his sufferings, she could scarcely resist the impulse of her feelings to indulge him in hope, she still obeyed the highest dictates of reason; and while with every tender care she softened the blow, she pointed out to him the impossibility of success.

As a woman, Louisa Mandeville was flexible and timid—as a Christian, she was connected itself in her mind with that of a lover; of all mankind, she loved George and Mr. Villars first, and next an old disabled soldier, who had served in her father's regiment.

Lord and lady Castlebrook, early on the following day, called for their daughter, and with captivating sweetness, lady Castlebrook, as she pressed the hands of Mrs. and Miss Mandeville, entreated that their kindness would not end here, but would add enjoyment to gratitude, in becoming friends to those they had already so materially served.

Louisa cast a pleading glance on her mother, who replied—"We shall always feel sincerely interested in lady Augusta; but I am far, very far, madam, from claiming a continuance of the acquaintance with which we were only honoured when chance made it necessary. *Here* your ladyship's visits will be always most acceptable; but——"

Lady Castlebrook interrupted her, and,

tears rising to her beautiful eyes, she said —"Do not say that I must never hope to see you and Miss Mandeville inmates of my house: believe me, warm gratitude is not the only sentiment with which you have inspired both my lord and me. Do I not see a soft pleader for me rising in your daughter's countenance? Surely, Mrs. Mandeville, you cannot resist her;" and Louisa felt, as she grasped the extended hand, that it must be much more impossible to resist the voice and smile of lady Castlebrook.

"There is another pleader," said lady Augusta, blushing, "which I hope Mrs. Mandeville will feel. From my mother's ill health, I am her representative in the country; and I am sure Mrs. Mandeville will not inflict, on one under so much obligation to her, a pain so very great as that of having lost her acquaintance by my thoughtless neglect."

On the minds of both mother and daughter the attractions of their new friends had made a strong impression; but

Louisa felt much more than mere admiration for lady Castlebrook; her fancy had been captivated by the fascination of her manner, which high fashion had polished, without depriving of its native sweetness; but her heart sympathized in the pensiveness which so frequently stole over her perfect features, and in the want of cordial, confiding love, which, even in their short acquaintance, she had perceived between lady Castlebrook and lady Augusta; and while the tear of sympathy with the former glistened in her azure eyes, she raised them in smiling gratitude to Heaven, that she was blessed with such a mother, and that her beloved mother possessed in her child all that the most fond and devoted attachment to her could give.

Just as Louisa was returning from the parsonage, whose now-afflicted inhabitants she or her mother saw every day, with surprise and pleasure she saw, at the cottage-door, a saddled horse, whose warlike appearance announced him to be the charger of lord Harcourt: with rapid steps and heightened colour, Louisa hastened on to gaze again on this glorious successor of her father, for lord Harcourt's regiment, she knew, was that formerly commanded by colonel Mandeville.

Lord Harcourt came to inform them, from lady Castlebrook, that lady Augusta had not been in the least fatigued by the carriage on her return home, and that (thanks to their kind care!) her parents hoped the following day would see her in her usual health.

"How very kind of dear——" Louisa checked herself, and repeated—"How very kind of lady Castlebrook to send us such pleasant intelligence!"

"She intended sending it by a servant, Miss Mandeville," said Harcourt, smiling.

"But from all we have heard of lord Harcourt," said Mrs. Mandeville, "we cannot be surprised by any instance of his good-nature."

At first Louisa sat in silence, sometimes, when his eyes were directed another way, timidly raising hers to his face, and withdrawing them in wonder that she should actually be in the situation of friendly intercourse with this hero, so elevated in her imagination; but soon cause for this wonder was increased, while the wonder was itself forgotten, in her being led into common conversation with him.

There was nothing in lord Harcourt's appearance to remind that he was the object of universal admiration, though all who conversed with him felt that he deserved to be so, even independent of his military fame. On the contrary, though his sentiments were lofty, and much of pride was in his martial step and brow, his manner and countenance were usually indicative rather of his softer feelings; Louisa only remembered that he was a hero, as it added a charm to the unassuming ease which banished all awe of him as such.

Now, for the first time, that charm of manner which every man thought must be a passport to the heart of woman, and which no woman had hitherto perceived, shone in all its captivation; for now, for the first time, in conversing with women, he felt that he conversed with rational beings of his own species, without the imagined necessity of being restrained to one particular subject.

Before he went, lord Harcourt asked Louisa, had she observed the charger at the door? saying he had rode him for the purpose of shewing him to her, as he had heard her express her admiration of war-horses, and thought few his equal in beauty.

Louisa accompanied him to the cottage-door.

"Miss Mandeville," said he, "you mentioned yesterday, that your father was an officer; was he the respected colonel Mandeville, who once commanded the —— regiment, who is still loved by tradition, though few of the men are alive who served under him?"

"He was," replied Louisa, while tears rolled unconsciously down her cheeks; "he was; mamma seldom has courage to speak of him, but I know his character from one of his old soldiers. My father died before my birth."

She stopped, with an effort to suppress her feelings; and while the tears still rested on her cheek, she smilingly added—"It was from poor old John I learned my admiration of war-horses; and it was from him we learned how much we ought to esteem lord Harcourt."

Many questions about old John followed on the part of Harcourt, who promised to visit his cottage the following day: he then rode off, highly pleased by the conversation of his new friends, and hoping to enjoy it soon again; but it must be acknowledged, that in the lonely hour when he retired for repose, his thoughts rested more on the battle of which they had been speaking, and the friends who had fallen in it, than on the azure eyes and harmonious voice of Louisa Mandeville.

For several minutes after he had left her, Louisa stood gazing on the road he had taken.

“ Why so pensive, love ?” inquired her mother.

Louisa seated herself in her accustomed place, and replied—“ I was thinking, mamma, of poor George; even though her rank and fortune had placed no obstacle between them, I see that lady Augusta is now out of his reach.”

“ Why so ?” said Mrs. Mandeville. “ On the contrary, I yesterday thought that her heart and her pride were at variance. I am sure, had George rank, even without wealth, she would be his.”

“ Not now,” answered Louisa, sorrowfully. “ If she has any regard for George, it must be very slight; and when lord Harcourt is his rival, what can we hope? To say the truth, I was enchanted by his conversation, without considering poor George's fate; but now I think only with pain on all that delighted me then.”

Mrs. Mandeville, though she did not wish to seem eager to catch at an acquaintance too long withheld, felt that propriety more than warranted her meeting the advances of lady Castlebrook; and in her next visit, in which lady Augusta was unable to accompany her, they accepted an invitation to dinner the day but one following.

In preparing, for the first time in her life, to enter a formal company, Louisa felt many emotions; she feared the haughty glance of lady Augusta—she feared that she might, by awkwardness, lose the partiality of lord and lady Castlebrook, and appear in the eyes of lord Harcourt as degenerating from the dignity which had strongly marked the character of her father; and never had Louisa paid so much attention to her toilet, and never had she felt so dissatisfied with it, as on this, to her, momentous day.

Trembling with bashful terror, she entered the stately saloon of Castlebrook. She was received with endearing kindness by its lovely mistress, and affectionate pleasure by lady Augusta, who felt that once admitted into her society, she might indulge her prepossession in favour of this "pretty cottager;" the awkwardness she dreaded was soon removed.

Mrs. Mandeville, naturally elegant, had found her greatest delight in giving her daughter all the polish, as well as all the solid information, she herself possessed; and Louisa, though easily abashed and tremblingly alive to disapprobation, was, when perfectly unembarrassed, graceful, frank, and playful. None could dislike her; but those who were not inclined to the contrary, might pass her over unnoticed. Had she possessed high rank, or any adventitious circumstance to call attention, none would have been considered more attractively lovely; but she might for ever remain unnoticed by those who did not begin by drawing her out. She was indeed appalled by the ceremonious state of a Castlebrook dinner; but soon encouraged by the watchful eye of her mother, the smiles of her two hostesses, and the marked attention of both lord Castlebrook and lord Harcourt, she forgot fears of herself, and when they were forgotten, she had no cause for them; and by the time they arrived at the dessert, she was alive only to the conversation around her.

The brilliancy of lady Augusta's pointed wit was so mingled with good-natured sweetness, that it enlivened instead of silencing Louisa: she did not speak much, not from any fear of doing so, but from her desire to hear every word that passed. There were few subjects on which she did not know enough to feel where any point of difficulty lay; she accurately measured the extent of her own information; it was too well founded for her to doubt its correctness, and she possessed an understanding too clear and sound, not to feel precisely the point at which her knowledge stopped, by this unconsciously betraying how distinct and well-arranged that knowledge was.

For the first time in his life, lord Harcourt felt almost tempted to request the ladies not to retire so soon; and as he attended them to the door, instead of standing in polite silence, endeavouring to conceal his pleasure at their departure, he continued to Louisa some comment on the subject they had been speaking of; and that evening he began to believe that women might greatly add to the pleasures of life. He had hitherto considered a wife only as the head and ornament of his house; he now began to weigh how far lady Augusta was capable of becoming the companion of his heart.

Louisa Mandeville had not yet appeared to him the loveliest of women, but she had raised his opinion of the sex; and from day to day, as his acquaintance with her became more intimate, his opinion of them became more correct. While her understanding appeared equal with that of the most sensible men he had ever known—while her beauty changed in his eyes from interesting to fascinating—while her playfulness seemed the most brilliant wit, softened by the modest gentleness of her nature, she was the most unassuming of human beings; while her opinions were too clear for her to doubt their accuracy, she always paused on them if contradicted, and considered the subject again before she ventured to support them; and she always preferred listening to the sentiments of others, to bringing forward her own. Her mind seemed eager to grasp at farther knowledge—her spirits flowed in amusement with childlike gaiety; yet when most brightly she smiled in conversation that opened to her new ideas—when most gaily she led the dance, or joined in laughing chat, she was ready to leave it on the smallest call of good-nature.

Lord and lady Castlebrook loved the sweetness of Louisa's character, and were delighted by her manners and conversation; and in the enjoyment of these, no fear for lord Harcourt's heart ever checked them: the father thought Louisa indeed lovely; but an idea of her rivalling the brilliant, peerless heiress of the house of Castlebrook, he would have ridiculed as an absurdity.

Lady Castlebrook, yet more strongly than her husband, felt all that Louisa was, and many a tear rolled down her cheek, from the wish that she had such a child. A marriage between lord Harcourt and lady Augusta she earnestly desired; wretched indeed would she have been, had she believed that it would be broken through; yet much more dearly she loved lord Harcourt than lady Augusta; and deep were the groans of agony which rent her bosom, when she thought that a woman of more domestic habits, and a softer mind, would have been better suited to him.

Lady Augusta was not undomestic, in the love of what is usually termed dissipation; the ball-room she did sometimes visit, but she felt beneath her a scene in which every girl with a pretty face, who had learned to dance, might shine as lovely; hers was an undomesticated mind, and alone, as she frequently was, with her parents, this could be indulged as much, or more, than in the crowded assembly; for it is not the natural sphere for the family virtues, and they are therefore more effectually eradicated, by bringing into the domestic circle the desire to shine, the love of admiration, and the other concomitants of undomestic scenes, than they could be in the highest round of fashionable dissipation, in which some moments must be free for the exercise of the affections, if the home is such as is calculated to cherish them.

During the period in which the health and spirits of lady Castlebrook were broken, by the successive loss of four children in the first year of their existence, her heart languished more for the endearments and society of a child, than for a perpetuator of her noble race; yet, from infancy upward, the mind and manners of lady Augusta Delamore were rather those of the proud daughter of affluence and grandeur than of the cherished child of affection.

Mrs. Mandeville and Louisa soon received a pressing invitation to Castlebrook; they had now been acquainted about a fortnight, and Mrs. Mandeville, with fond delight, saw her Louisa daily gaining ground in the affections of their new friends. Both felt pleasure in their preparations for this visit; each individual of the family had interested them; and though sensible of her many faults, Mrs. Mandeville sufficiently admired lady Augusta, to feel her a most valuable friend for Louisa; she saw something in her fine expressive countenance, that bespoke her formed for better things than the proud coquette or self-dependent genius, receiving none of her pleasures from the softer cares and gentler intercourse of life.

Louisa was to commence her visit alone, as, since her widowhood, her mother could not enter any scene of festive gaiety; and the first evening they were invited, was dedicated to a ball in honour of lord Harcourt, which the indisposition of his fair cousin had delayed till now. George Villars had been invited, but at the entreaties of Louisa had excused himself.

Lord Harcourt, for the first time since his arrival at Castlebrook, wore his uniform: Louisa started when she saw it, and sighed as she looked at him, and thought —"Was such the man my mother lost? was such the man whose whole heart she possessed? oh, what she must have suffered!"

Lord Harcourt perceived her emotion; his countenance became clouded, and kindly taking her hand in his, he said—"I once heard you say you wished, yet dreaded to see the uniform of your gallant father; and I thought that to-night, when Mrs. Mandeville was absent, and when the gay scene would draw you from melancholy reflection, was the best time for your wish to be gratified—but I little knew you. Indeed, Miss Mandeville, every day but teaches me how short of what is worthy of you was the high, admiring esteem I felt for you the day before."

Never had Louisa's cheek glowed, or her heart swelled, with such pleasure as at these words; she felt raised in her own opinion by the praise of such a man as lord Harcourt; she did not answer, and lord Harcourt added, in a more cheerful tone—" But I wanted you to quote for me a line from your favourite Burns; can you think of one which, at this moment, would make me very happy, and would not, I hope, be false?"

Louisa knew what he alluded to, and, incapable of a look or word of dissimulation, she smilingly replied—

> " That gallant badge, that dear cockade,
> I love you for the sake o't."

Just as she timidly withdrew her hand from the fervent grasp of his, lady Augusta approached them, attended by some young ladies, who declared themselves enchanted by Louisa's beauty, remarking, in every praise of her eyes, nose, and mouth, that it was the image of lord Harcourt's.

A smile of mingled contempt and drollery curled the lip, and arched the brow, of lady Augusta, as, with courteous politeness, she said to the young lady who had been most lavish in these covered praises of her noble cousin—" If lord Harcourt is disengaged, I am sure he will be most happy to dance with lady Mary Graves."

Bowing low, lord Harcourt received her hand, and endured all his former awkwardness, "how he was to express his great pleasure in the circumstance."

Not long after he had led his fair partner to her chaperon did he remain at her side, and the moment he left her, he sought the spot where lady Augusta stood receiving universal homage, and where Louisa smiled by her side, partly amazed and partly entertained by the repellent dignity with which she repulsed those of her courtiers whose homage was unacceptable, and the perfect politeness with which she knew to utter words the most haughty and almost insolent.

A moment lord Harcourt paused, to mark the strong contrast. The proud glance of lady Augusta sunk not under the most ardent gaze; she had the power of repressing familiarity by a look of chilling contempt; while Louisa, shrinking from observation, seemed incapable of raising her eyes to any object that displeased her: the one required to be the object of universal admiration—the other neither avoided or sought it, but seemed abashed by a degree of notice that made her feel that her words and movements were exposed to remark, even though it were favourable; the whole expression of the one was haughtiness, confidence, and talent—of the other, sensibility, softness, and gaiety.

Harcourt was still contemplating them, when lord Castlebrook approached him.—"It is strange," he said, "that while your cousin bears no resemblance to you, every one remarks that between you and Miss Mandeville; and now my attention is called to it, I not only fancy that I see it, but also a likeness to your mother, and some others of our family; yet I am very sure there never could have been any intermarriage between a Delamore and a Mandeville."

He then turned to Louisa, and asked, had she heard the general remark?

"Yes, and not for the first time," she answered; "for long before I ever knew your family, old John, who served under both my father and lord Harcourt, had told me that I resembled his young commander much more than my own parent."

"There now is Harcourt's very smile," said lord Castlebrook; "if you were relations, it is what would be considered the strongest family-likeness."

But since they were not relations, this it could not be; and Harcourt ventured, in a whisper, to inquire, did she not believe that similarity of mind might cause a resemblance of features as well as countenance?

Never had Louisa gazed so intently on her mirror as she did this night, to trace, in the soft blushes of her cheek, and the sweet smiles of her lip and eye, the resemblance that called them forth; and doubtless lord Harcourt surveyed, with unusual complacency, the fine features which he now felt must be uninjured by the fatigues of war, and the changes of climate, since the voice even of flattery or of affection could pronounce them like those of Louisa Mandeville.

Still unobserved by lord and lady Castlebrook, the attachment of Harcourt at every hour gained additional force. Still the proud father imagined, that while he found a childish pleasure in the society of the pretty Louisa, his whole sense and taste must lead him to seek the hand his ambitious views must so ardently desire; and still, for another passing fortnight, the mother sighed that she had not such a child as Louisa to bestow on her beloved young friend, but endeavoured to persuade herself that he was willing to obey the wishes of lord Ennerdale, and might find happiness in the brilliant talents of Augusta.

Not so the watchful eye of Mrs. Mandeville; she saw that Louisa had not only charmed his fancy, but won his heart, and that all the ties of mutual attachment would shortly bind them to each other; she felt that he was himself above the considerations of wealth and grandeur; but she felt also that his haughty father would ill brook the idea that his only child, the heir of lofty titles and unmeasured wealth, the theme of universal praise, who might aspire even to the lovely heiress of Castlebrook, should unite himself to the slightly-portioned daughter of an officer of undistinguished, though respectable family; and this she had determined to represent to Louisa, when, entering her room about a fortnight after their arrival at Castlebrook, she found her dissolved in tears.

Rising on her mother's appearance, she smiled, and busied herself so as to conceal her face; but, unused to any concealment, she burst again into tears, and rested her head on the shoulder of her mother.

Mrs. Mandeville pressed her in her arms, and after a moment's pause, she said—" Louisa, I do not ask the cause of these tears—too well I guess it; but still, my love, let every little feeling be freely expressed to me. They were connected with lord Harcourt?"

" They were, mamma."

" And in what manner, dearest?" asked Mrs. Mandeville.

" I should feel happier if I told you all, mamma—I know I should."

" Then speak, love," said Mrs. Mandeville; " confide in your fondest, truest friend."

" In my mother," said Louisa, raising her head, with a smile.

Mrs. Mandeville sighed, and kissing her with strong emotion, she said—" Yes, precious child of my heart, in a mother."

" Well, mamma, I was thinking, and perhaps I am wrong, that lady Augusta is not so very amiable as we could wish her; she is a fine noble creature, but she has not that devoted attachment to her parents, that domestic turn of mind, that softness, I should wish her to have."

" For the sake of her parents?" said Mrs. Mandeville, with a half-smile.

Louisa shook her head.

"And for another reason," continued her mother; "you do not think her suited to lord Harcourt?"

"Yes, that was what I felt; she has not the delicacy of feeling, the quick sensibility, the warmth of heart, which would correspond with his character. It is partly the fault of education, but still she is not suited to him; and then I thought, mamma, that if I had been in her situation, I would have made him happier."

Louisa paused for a moment, then, with heightening blushes, doubtfully raised her eyes to the face of her mother.

"And I go farther," said Mrs. Mandeville; "I think, that as you are, you would make him infinitely happier; and he thinks so also."

Louisa was silent; but her eloquent eyes, and glowing cheeks, sufficiently spoke her feelings.

Mrs. Mandeville gazed on her with a melancholy smile, then said—"But, my

Louisa, not so does his father think; and, oh! never may I see you, my heart's best treasure, enter a family where you are disapproved and scorned by all but one adored individual—one on whom every feeling must fix with idolatry, and who may, in one dreadful moment, be torn from your arms, leaving you isolated on the earth. I speak from experience, Louisa—sad experience."

"You are not isolated, mamma," said Louisa, fondly; "you are not alone."

"One who possesses all the affections, who loves with more than maternal tenderness such a child, can never be wholly wretched; and the sweet reproach of those eyes is just, my dearest—those very sorrows blessed me with my Louisa; but, oh, *his* child——" Mrs. Mandeville checked herself, and more calmly added—"But sorrow I have known, Louisa, which I could never live to know again through you, my dearer self. You love lord Harcourt, and he deserves it."

Louisa started; but the ingenuous

blush which glowed on her cheek she attempted not to falsify.

"And what is your hope, my child?" at length inquired Mrs. Mandeville.

"I hope never to act unworthily of you," answered Louisa, firmly—"never to call down fresh sorrows on your head, mamma; and if you think that this must end in misery——" She struggled with her tears, and added, in a lower tone—"I can return home, be happy as I was, and never remember that I had fancied higher happiness. All the poor people will be so delighted to see us! We shall have our reading, our work, our music, our pretty cottage, and the dear Villars; and I shall be as gay as ever."

She tried to smile, while the tears rolled quickly down her cheeks.

Mrs. Mandeville was silent for several minutes; and the struggle between the fond wish to grant her daughter present happiness, and the tender fear for future sorrow, was visible on her countenance; but hers was a mind where the dictates of reason were ever preferred to those of momentary inclination, and Louisa read in her eyes that the sacrifice must be made.—"Well then," she said, "the sooner we go the better—to-morrow morning perhaps; and do not look so very sad, mamma—the pleasure I have enjoyed here has not been passing pleasure; my mind has been opened, my knowledge enlarged by his conversation, and I will carry home my store of intellectual treasure, to make our cottage life yet happier, and to make me a companion better suited to you."

"Louisa," exclaimed Mrs. Mandeville, "you were not born to this; the same splendour which has warped the character of lady Augusta, would but have enlarged the sphere of your excellence; your understanding, undazzled by magnificence, would have grasped at the opportunities of improvement her vanity has cast away; your virtues, unsullied by flattery, would have shone brighter on the eminence which has strained hers, until their texture is weakened; you would have been the blessing of all—and she perhaps, softened by adversity, humbled in retirement, might have possessed the thousand sympathies of human life which had rendered her character so lovely. Yet lady Castlebrook is so amiable, so incapable of——"

Again Mrs. Mandeville checked the coming words.

Louisa looked at her with surprise; then smilingly she said—"But, mamma, you cannot judge of what I would have been, reared in the heated atmosphere of flattery, instead of in the even flow of fond maternal care, which, like the dew on the fleece of Gideon, shewed that the blessing of Heaven was with me. Well then, mamma, it is determined that we shall go to-morrow, and you will announce it this evening."

During dinner, Louisa was silent, and many a sigh heaved her breast, as she thought that perhaps it was the last time she should enjoy this dear society.

Fearful that she would betray her emotion, Mrs. Mandeville delayed announcing their departure until the ladies had returned to the drawing-room, and Louisa, from the same apprehension, had retired to her own apartment.

Lady Augusta warmly expressed her sorrow at losing them, and soon went to seek Louisa.

Lady Castlebrook seemed incapable, at first, of uttering her feelings; but after a long pause, raising her tearful eyes, she said—"I knew that Louisa had soothed many a moment of wretchedness—that I most fondly loved her; but until you spoke of taking her from me, I knew not how necessary she was become to the degree of peace I can ever know. I forgot that she was not my own child, until the right of a real mother interposed.

"Perhaps——" said Mrs. Mandeville.

The glance of her eyes, as she uttered the word, seemed like a serpent's sting to the heart of lady Castlebrook; she sprung from her chair, then reseating herself, her countenance became composed, though more than ever melancholy.

Mrs. Mandeville, as she looked at the softness of her beautiful eyes, and felt the magic sweetness of her voice, thought that to finish the sentence she had begun would be unjust and cruel.

The silence that ensued was only interrupted by the entrance of the gentlemen, and soon after of lady Augusta and Louisa.

Deeply wrapped in thought, Mrs. Mandeville scarcely remembered their presence. Lady Castlebrook dreaded again to mention the subject; and Louisa sat listening to lord Harcourt's efforts at conversation, and wondering did he yet know her mother's determination.

Lady Augusta was occupied in reflections which she wished might be interrupted, yet could not banish from her mind; and lord Castlebrook proposing that the mute party might be enlivened by was necessary to all his hopes of domestic felicity.

There was something in Louisa so retired, so quiet, that his attachment to her had grown without his ever reflecting that he was in love—that is, that his heart was fixed on one individual, singly and solely, as the joy of future life; and now, when he recollected it, a blush, and smile of wonder at himself, stole over his features; but not long did these thoughts occupy his mind. Louisa arose from his side, and, as she turned, on his seizing her hand to detain her, he perceived that the long-restrained tears had filled her eyes. He drew her aside from lady Augusta, who seemed scarcely to perceive the action, and standing at a distant window, the happy Louisa received the offer of his hand, his rank, his wealth, and the assurance that his heart was already irrevocably hers.

She heard him in silence; but the repeated pressure of her hand convinced her that he read in her countenance all he wished; but a sudden recollection crossed her mind, and a sudden cloud dimmed the lustre of her eyes.—"Your father," she said, in a tremulous tone.

Harcourt started; but a smile dispelling the shade which for a moment rested on his countenance, he said—"He shall know you, my Louisa, and glory in the choice of his son."

Both turned as he spoke, on a sigh of agony behind them.

Pale and trembling, lady Castlebrook tried to smile, and clasping their united hands, she exclaimed, in a low and hurried tone—"Be happy, sweetest child; be happy, dear noble Harcourt, as you deserve to be, and leave me to the misery, the disgrace, I have brought upon myself."

Louisa instinctively followed her; but motioning to her to desist, lady Castlebrook left the room.

Louisa looked at lord Harcourt for an explanation; then whispering—"Perhaps she does not wish us to be noticed," she returned to the circle, who were now called to supper. Her warm heart could not glow with perfect joy, unless her mother partook of it, and, as they approached the table, she whispered—" I am happy."

Lady Castlebrook sent to beg they would excuse her, as she had a headache, and had retired to rest.

END OF VOL. II.

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LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.
1822.

CONTINUATION OF THE TALE OF THE

Heiress of Castlebrook.

WHEN Mrs. Mandeville heard Louisa's relation, she determined that it was still for the best that she should return home; and this she communicated to lord Harcourt, when they met next morning before breakfast. She agreed with him, that as he was under no kind of engagement with lady Augusta Delamore, and as it must be visible to every one that he had no share in her regard, there was no necessity for his communicating to lord Castlebrook his present situation, which he wished himself to be the first to communicate to his father.

They were still happily engaged in conversing on future arrangements, when lady Castlebrook's maid entered, with a request from her mistress to see Miss Mandeville.

Louisa, instantly obeying the summons, found her still in bed, pale and languid. Extending her arms to her young friend, she desired her attendant to withdraw, and wept in unrestrained anguish: when a little recovered, she said—"Louisa, I sent for you to be what you have ever been—the sweet soother of affliction. Mine is a woe that admits not of human aid, but in your presence I find a consolation inexpressible, incomprehensible; hear my words, and repeat them not—understand them not—think of them no more, or regard them as the ravings of madness, and blame me not.—But why dictate to you? you will be all that is patient, indulgent, soft, and tender—would I might say affectionate!"

"Affectionate!" repeated Louisa; "oh,

lady Castlebrook! if you could read my heart——"

"Then do you love me?" exclaimed lady Castlebrook, earnestly regarding her; "yes—yes, you do, as you love all your fellow-creatures. You are a Christian, Louisa! you do not, and you must not, know the pangs of conscience—of remorse! Oh! misery unutterable!"

Louisa indeed believed these words to proceed from alienation of mind, and she shuddered with emotion as she seated herself on the bed.

"Speak to me," she continued, "dearest Louisa—your very voice is soothing to me. Speak!"

"Will you not see your daughter?" said Louisa; "she surely does not know that you are ill, or she would be here."

"No, no!" exclaimed lady Castlebrook; "Augusta knows that I am ill, but she is not like you, Louisa. Oh! I had hoped to find in her one who could love me—one whom I could cherish in my inmost [illegible] the family [illegible] not!"

[illegible] replied [illegible] is not the [illegible] minute atten- [illegible] display and [illegible] affection, but she [illegible]

[illegible] said lady [illegible] the affection of [illegible] on me, but [illegible] for me! I cannot [illegible] impossible! Oh, [illegible] been such as you [illegible] ranks of life—in a [illegible]——I know not what I say!"

[illegible] believed that the wish was connected with lord Harcourt, beneath whose [illegible] the lower ranks would have placed her, and one throb of indignation swelled her heart; but it was quickly calmed as she looked at lady Castlebrook, and thought that nothing, but what was kind [illegible] er, could come from her.—"You are feverish," she said; "pray try to sleep— I will watch over you."

"No," lady Castlebrook mournfully replied, "I do not rave; there is a meaning in what I say, which you do not—cannot know!"

"Is it connected with me?" asked Louisa, starting.

"Would that it were!" she energetically replied.

"Then with lord Harcourt?" repeated Louisa.

"Yes—deeply, dreadfully!—But do not inquire farther, best and dearest Louisa! and never—never repeat what I say. I am feverish, you said—yes, Louisa, on my heart there is a preying, burning, anguished fever. Eighteen years now——What is your age?"

Louisa started at the abrupt manner in which she uttered this question, seemingly so unconnected with the subject, but answered calmly—"Eighteen."

"Oh! would it were indeed possible!—

But you will stay with me—will be my child?"

Terrified, Louisa wished to quit the room in order to send for a physician, but, fearful of alarming her, she quietly and silently remained, until she was relieved by a summons to breakfast, which lady Castlebrook desired her to obey.

The inquiries of the whole party for the invalid were anxious and affectionate; but Louisa was surprised to find her daughter's anxiety no greater than that of lord Harcourt; in her eyes, her lovely friend seemed a creature to be loved by a child, even as she loved her mother.

Without any tender wish to see and be with her, lady Augusta inquired—"Did Louisa think she could be of any use in the sick room?"

Desirous to awaken for each other, in the breasts of the mother and daughter, the affection both were so calculated to inspire, she replied in the affirmative; and when she arose from a hasty breakfast, to return to lady Castlebrook's apartment, lady Augusta accompanied her.

Mrs. Mandeville followed, and drawing Louisa back, she said, with evident emotion—"You mentioned that lady Castlebrook was delirious—on what subject does she speak?"

"She desired me not to tell," replied Louisa.

Mrs. Mandeville would not press her farther, but slowly and thoughtfully she retired, wishing her question could have been freely answered, yet scarcely knowing in what manner.

To her great amazement, Louisa heard lady Castlebrook, with tolerable composure and perfect consistency, speak with lady Augusta, and afterwards the physician. It had not, then, been the delirium of fever; but Louisa's whole soul recoiled from the idea, that a creature so soft—so fascinating—so apparently amiable, should really bear on her conscience the load of guilt of which she had complained.

The bewitching manners—the fond endearment—the pensiveness—the mysterious situation of lady Castlebrook, bound the heart of Louisa in a magic chain. Still, day after day, while debility, or slight degree of fever, and the dreadful state of her nerves, confined her to her chamber, and sometimes to her bed, Louisa, with unremitting tenderness and patience, preserved her station beside her, receiving, at intervals when alone with her, the mysterious confidences which she soon too plainly saw possessed some real meaning.

Naturally good-natured and affectionate, lady Augusta was a frequent visitor in the apartment of her mother, and remained with Louisa, half-admiring, half-despising, and entirely loving the fond, watchful tenderness of which she was herself incapable; her kind feelings would have led her to do any thing she felt beneficial to her mother; but of every thing she justly observed—“ Louisa will do it so much better—so much more tenderly, than I could;” and with pain and astonishment Louisa soon perceived that, except when engaged in conversation with her, lady Augusta felt her short stay in her mother's room rather a duty than a pleasure; and that, frequently, on her first appearance, a glance of agony would cross the pale face of lady Castlebrook, which could only be removed by some endearing care on the part of her youthful favourite.

"Do you know, Louisa," said lady Augusta one day, "I am beginning to think that, with all my boasted talents—all my far-famed beauty, my pride, and my magnificence, I am very inferior to you. I thought it yesterday, when, with tears in her eyes, your mother said you were the comfort of her life, and that, but for you, sorrow had long since laid her in the grave. To be such a blessing to such a woman as Mrs. Mandeville surely raises you very high."

"High indeed must I be raised, if I rise to lady Augusta," said Louisa, with a smile.

"But my parents have not deserved

such a child as you are," continued lady Augusta; "my mother and I have had little intercourse through life, and I have been but my father's pride—you your mother's darling: but, in fact, I was not formed for that kind of thing," and a flash of returning haughtiness glanced over her features. "Had we been sisters, Louisa, our characters had been admirably calculated for the happiness of our parents; you their fond nurse in sickness—their pretty, playful darling in gaiety—their soft, pious soother in adversity; I——"

She stopped, and, in the pride of acknowledged talents and superior charms, cast an arch glance on Louisa, who smiled and added—"Their glory in prosperity—their prop and support in the adversity which I could only soothe."

"Their glory! their pride! yes," said lady Augusta, in a melancholy tone, "and am I the more happy?"

Louisa looked up, and saw her fine and haughty countenance sad and downcast, and her sparkling eyes surcharged with tears.—"Lady Augusta!" she exclaimed, taking her hand, while her countenance reflected the expression of her friend's.

"I am the child of luxury—of splendour, Louisa," she replied, "but not of happiness. Ask me no farther—tempt me not, for I am too likely to fall from the duty I owe to my illustrious house;" and at the magic word her lofty form resumed all its former haughtiness, and she left the room.

Louisa felt heartsick.—"What indeed is earthly grandeur?" she thought. "Poor George might now be happy; lady Augusta might taste real, solid felicity, but for this vain show—this gaudy bauble, in which she nevertheless exults. In the affections alone is true earthly happiness to be found;" and Louisa smiled as she thought of lord Harcourt and her mother.

At the moment, lady Castlebrook awakened from an uneasy slumber, exclaiming—"Can a mother forget her sucking child? oh, yes!—oh, yes! its feeble cry!—Guilt! misery!—Harcourt! Augusta! my child! my child!" Then awakening more thoroughly, she opened the curtain, and asked—"Are you alone, my Louisa?"

"I am, madam," she replied, as she tremblingly approached the bed, and arranging the pillows, kissed her, and inquired, was she worse?

"My *heart!*—my *heart,* Louisa! there is the gnawing worm! then, when I think that in a lowly station Augusta might have been more amiable—more really happy, it rends my heart."

"Lady Augusta seems fitted for splendour," said Louisa, timidly.

The eyes of lady Castlebrook sparkled with eager delight, and raising herself on the pillows, she gazed on Louisa.—"Do you really think so? sweetest comforter! perhaps you are right—you are always right.—You really think so?"

"I do," answered Louisa.

"But, oh! the babe born to——perishing in want, or living in infamy—who might have been saved if——Oh! wretched, wretched, guilty mother!" She threw the sheet over her face, and groaned aloud.

Louisa shuddered, and after a pause of a few minutes, she said—"If you think, dearest lady Castlebrook, that to confide in me would, in any degree, relieve your mind, believe me, you may trust me."

"I know it," she exclaimed, "Louisa. My dying child I gave to strangers—its dying moments were unsoothed by a mother's care. Oh, Louisa! your likeness to Harcourt! but I know—I can have no doubt—it is absolutely impossible—speak of it no more! if you were indeed mine, I should rejoice in the shame brought on myself by acknowledging the awful deed; but no—such joy is not for me! Oh, no! oh, no! think of it no more!" A violent hysterical attack followed this burst of agony.

Quivering with terror and emotion, Louisa retained presence of mind not to call in any assistance, while she continued in a state in which she would be likely to betray what should only reach the ear of the most faithful friendship.

Immediately on recovering, lady Castlebrook was sensible of this tender precaution; and again and again she solemnly blessed Louisa, praying, that if her unhappy daughter yet lived, she might resemble her.

Exhausted by agitation and terror, Louisa left her early in the day, and, unable to bear the presence of her mother or lord Harcourt while her feelings must be concealed from them, yet unwilling, while her mind was so troubled and confused, to let it work on itself, she walked alone towards the parsonage.

The mystery of lady Castlebrook was far from lightened by her late confidence. Louisa felt perplexed; she knew not how to esteem a woman once capable of such guilt as she had expressed, and to cease to love her was impossible. From some words she had uttered, it appeared that the ever-lamented infant had been exchanged for lady Augusta, and this would explain the connexion of lord Harcourt, as the rightful heir, in the mystery. The motives for such an action were still unknown, and would probably for ever remain so; but when Louisa thought on the lovely lady Castlebrook she had first loved, softly, though pensively, smiling in the most bewitching endearment, and on the wretched penitent she had just left, she doubted if she were not in a painful dream—again the real misery of the brilliant, envied heiress of Castlebrook!

Louisa would have been ready to turn disgusted from a world of sin and sorrow, had not the dear images of Harcourt and her mother risen before her mind; but these also were soon darkened by a sigh; soon might that noble Harcourt be compelled by filial duty to give up the object of his affections—soon might that tender mother see her darling deserted and unhappy; and why? because she possessed not the wealth and splendour which withheld lady Augusta from what would have been her real felicity.

The dying George Villars next called forth her sighs, as her unsteady steps approached the house of his parents; but when she entered there, the cheerful smiles of his mother raised a correspondent glow on her countenance.—"George is better then?" she exclaimed, in a tone of pleasure, as she met Mrs. Villars.

The mother answered, that he was so much recovered, she hoped he had almost conquered his fatal attachment—that his spirits were revived, his colour returned, and his countenance had resumed its former play.

The account of his father was different; in the presence of his wife, he forbore to blast her hopes; but when, her short visit concluded, he accompanied Louisa across the fields leading to Castlebrook, he expressed his own deep, though vague, anxiety for his son; it was, true, his spirits had wonderfully improved—"But," said Mr. Villars, "he has lost the even cheerfulness, once the sunshine of our lives—his countenance wants the serenity that once gave dignity to its fiery ardour—his manner has lost its wakeful attention to passing objects—alas, my sweet friend! I fear he rather grasps at renewed hope, than seeks that tree of life which alone could sweeten the waters of affliction—the waters of Marah." He then earnestly implored her to exert her influence to persuade his infatuated boy to give up a pursuit which must end in misery.

A new and painful source of reflection was now opened to her. Was it possible that lady Augusta secretly encouraged a passion she appeared to despise? It was new to her innocent, confiding heart, to suspect duplicity or art; but in this mysterious mother and daughter every thing was calculated to inspire doubt. Agitated and trembling, she had almost reached the avenue, when her reverie was interrupted by a female figure, which, quick as a flash of light, crossed her path; the height, the majesty of step, all announced lady Augusta; but why should she fly from her? The question was soon answered, when, turning to see what path she had taken, she perceived George Villars standing at a distance, gazing after her.

For some time, Louisa continued to walk near the house, partly in the hope that lady Augusta would join her, and partly in order to consider what was her duty on the occasion. At once she felt it would be wrong to betray to lord Castlebrook a circumstance which would certainly destroy his confidence in his daughter, and which might perhaps be less premeditated than appearances warranted her to conclude. In this indulgent hope however she was mistaken.

Pride, the ruling passion of lady Augusta's breast, had enabled her so far to conquer her growing preference for Villars, as to receive, with pleasure, the noble suitor, whose addresses she had determined to accept, at whatever sacrifice of the inclinations of her heart. His failure in the devoted attention to which Villars had accustomed her, again awakened a sentiment of regret for him; but this very failure was a fresh incitement to her vanity to succeed in the conquest of Harcourt's hitherto-obdurate heart, and proudly she smiled in every incident which led to the accomplishment of this design. Every sentiment she most wished to annihilate was, however, revived by the agony of Villars, on the day which first introduced her to Mrs. Mandeville, and when lord Harcourt seemed more in her reach than he had yet been; but, as a duty towards her family, and towards herself, she exerted all her powers to repel them; and anxiously she desired the declaration from lord Harcourt, which would, in a manner, compel their relinquishment; but still she saw him ready to turn from her to Louisa. She could not indeed believe that Louisa was preferred to her, but it was in vain she endeavoured to persuade herself that she was preferred to Louisa; and even if she had been, she found, in lord Harcourt's manner, something which forced her to look back with sorrow to the devoted attachment of George Villars.

Lessened in her own opinion by the mild, unassuming superiority of Louisa, chance and nurse Morton again brought

George to cross her path; and again she heard herself extolled as the first, the best, as well as fairest, of her sex; and saw a youth, whose talents and information all must admire, literally sinking into the grave under her disdain. All her sense of duty had hitherto turned on preserving her native dignity—all her desires, on the acquisition of new splendour; but now, the very pride which inspired these sentiments fixed her heart on one who could not gratify them. She felt, that in uniting herself to Villars, she must for ever relinquish the affection of her hitherto-doting father, and destroy all the hopes her mother had so ardently fixed on seeing her the wife of lord Harcourt.

Her breast tortured by conflicting emotions, she almost envied Louisa's lot; but at the same time she saw Louisa ready to sacrifice every thing at the shrine of filial duty, and she determined she also would hold to what her principles called on her to do; and when she left Louisa that morning, she had determined to see Villars no more. Too proud to seek advice, however, she trusted to her own resolution; and this was easily shaken, when Morton assured her, that with tears he had entreated one moment's interview.

There is something in the tears of a high-spirited man irresistibly touching to the heart of woman; they rarely flow for slight emotions, but seem to express a deep and powerful feeling; and to be the object of this feeling was strongly interesting, not only to the tenderness of lady Augusta, but to her ruling pride; thus at once awakening in his favour the good and evil of her haughty but generous nature. Her family pride called on her to renounce, but her female pride, joined with the better feelings of her heart, in forcing her to encourage him.

Unused to mystery or doubt, Louisa entered the castle pale and dispirited. Lord Harcourt met her, and his anxious tenderness brought a faint smile to her lip; but it was quickly banished by the uncertainty whether she had a right to confide to him the mysterious appearance of lady Augusta; and though every thought of her own heart would have been open to him, she was silent where another was concerned; the very desire she was conscious of to make him a partaker in every sentiment, leading her to yet more scrupulous guard on herself.

The blush and forced ease of lady Augusta on seeing her, betraying that there was something to be *carried off*, painfully assured Louisa that the meeting had not been one of chance; and this determined her to communicate it to her mother, whose influence with lady Augusta, she hoped, might here be usefully exerted.

To a perfectly innocent and unerring mind, any part or share, even knowledge of wrong in another, is painfully burdensome; and to an indifferent observer, who knew that one of the parties had acted ill, the blushing, restless, silent Louisa would have appeared the criminal, until she had reposed the secret, of which she was the accidental partaker, in the maternal bosom, where all her pains and pleasures, wants and wishes, rested.

Mrs. Mandeville paused thoughtfully, then said—"You must not remain here longer, my Louisa; you must not, for any object, expose your own character to doubt or blame; and as the friend of George, and her favourite companion, you may be implicated in her imprudence."

"Is not this rather selfish, mamma?" asked Louisa, blushing.

"No, my love," replied her mother; "the strong, the peculiar interest this lovely, though faulty, lady Augusta has excited in my heart, renders it impossible that I should, from selfish motives, act against her interests. I shall speak to her seriously on the subject, and I do not see that our remaining here can be of farther use; but even if it could, it is not selfishness to restrain you from injuring yourself to benefit another."

"But lady Castlebrook—to desert her!" said Louisa.

"You are yourself ill and nervous,

love," her mother answered; "and even if you were to return here, I must have you for a few days in our peaceful home. You have no right, for lady Castlebrook or any other person, to injure my only joy in existence: lord Harcourt too is miserable about you; once he sees you restored to tranquillity and home, he can return to his father; but while you continue in this agitated state, he cannot and will not leave you."

Louisa's feelings led her to remain still to be the soother of her fascinating and unhappy friend, but she felt the justice of her mother's arguments; she saw the anxiety with which she and lord Harcourt observed her own faded appearance, and resolving no longer to indulge her own feelings at the expence of theirs, she promised to return with her mother, the first day lady Castlebrook had made any visible amendment; and in the meantime avoided any knowledge of lady Augusta's actions, either by casualty or confidence.

Mrs. Mandeville, however, seized the

first opportunity of private conversation with lady Augusta, to tell her what Louisa had seen, and to warn her of the misery she was bringing on herself and her unhappy lover.—" If you are still determined to reject him, why encourage a passion already so fatal to his peace? if you will marry him, why conceal it from a father whose whole heart is wrapped up in you—whose grey hairs any failure of confiding affection, on your part, would bring down with sorrow to the grave? The heart may not be in our own power. Your preference for this young man, however destructive to your father's ambitious views in you, may be forgiven; but this duplicity—this want of confidence, never can. Lady Augusta, whatever be your future intentions, you are *now* acting ill, either by your parents or your lover, and probably by both."

Lady Augusta burst into tears.—" Mrs. Mandeville," she said, " had these words come from any other lips, I should have spurned them as an insult; but you seem to take so lively, so tender an interest in my fate, that, from you, they go to my heart; you will, I am sure, believe me: I have never stooped from the dignity of my house, by one moment thinking of George Villars as the husband of its heiress; I but sought to soothe his mind by pitying sympathy; but I shall do so no more. Since Augusta Delamore is not above the censure of the world, she must act as one of its worthless votaries; and remember, should that generous heart burst in the agony of unpitied affliction, he does not die the victim of my cold, heartless pride, but of that world which wanted sufficient candour to hold the dignity of lady Augusta Delamore above suspicion."

"He is now," observed Mrs. Mandeville, "the less to be pitied, as the cause of his late peculiar sufferings is removed; since lord Harcourt——"

"Seeks me not!" interrupted lady Augusta, haughtily; "but, believe me, neither my pride or my affection have been wounded by Louisa's conquest." She stopped, and blushed to find herself led, by indignant vanity, into the meanness she had often ridiculed in others—of affecting to despise what was beyond her reach; and with a heightened blush, she added—"My affection, indeed, rejoices in seeing my lovely friend sought by a man so worthy of her; and my pride in my noble cousin is gratified by a choice, which proves him as estimable in private as he is glorious in public life."

Mrs. Mandeville's eyes filled with tears of tenderness and "fond regret," as she observed this little turn of feeling and thought.—"How lovely had this creature been, had the sensibility of her nature been expanded by tenderness, instead of being counteracted by pride!"

Lord Harcourt had agreed to leave Castlebrook on the same day with the Mandevilles; rather risking the premature disclosure of his engagement, than any doubt of his sentiments, which might be entertained, should he continue an inmate of lord Castlebrook's house, one hour after the object which had really formed its attraction; and when Louisa returned to the breakfast-parlour, after her agitated parting with lady Castlebrook, she found him alone, equipped for travelling.—"When shall we next meet," she asked—"in weal or woe?"

"Soon, my Louisa, and in joy unclouded. My father will come to claim his lovely child—will find in her the perfect representative of all he laments in his wife. Oh, my Louisa! when shall I see you clasped in his dear, venerable arms! But, dearest, why those tears?"

"We have been very happy," said Louisa, on whose mind all the dark hints of lady Castlebrook burst with superstitious force in this hour of separation.

"And shall be more so," exclaimed lord Harcourt, energetically.

"Is that possible?" she said, trying to smile with cheerful placidity; but finding the effort ineffectual, she laughed, and added—"You are a most unsentimental lover, or you would rejoice in my tears—precious drops—sweet pledges of attachment, *et cetera!*"

"Precious drops—sweet pledges of attachment!" repeated lord Harcourt, kissing them off, while correspondent drops wet his own manly cheek.

"Soon to meet again, I hope, my little Titania," said lord Castlebrook, as he handed her into the carriage which was to convey her home.

The idea that she was about to disappoint his wishes for his child, thrilled through her heart with such strong emotion, that Louisa would have gladly thrown herself on his neck, there to weep her thanks for his paternal tenderness of manner towards her.

"Adieu, dear Louisa!" said lady Augusta, with unusual softness.

Lord Harcourt was at the moment mounting his horse, and she kindly whispered—"I know your wishes—may they be prosperous!"

The carriage drove off; lord Harcourt turned another way, and was soon out of sight.

Observing something of unusual seriousness hang on the brow of her mother, Louisa attributing it to anxiety on her account, sought, by every playful art of childlike endearment, to dispel it; but every picture her fancy sketched of future happiness could only call forth a degree of tenderness, if possible, exceeding that which usually marked the manner of the mother to her darling child; and in almost continued silence on her part, they reached the cottage.

Here Louisa had a thousand occupations in which she endeavoured to interest her mother; but though Mrs. Mandeville visited with her every apartment and every plant, heard her try if her pianoforte had suffered from her absence, and listened to the thousand questions about her common occupations, with which she endeavoured to interest her own and her mother's mind, still her thoughts seemed to wander from the garden, the dog, and her favourite old woman, to something sad and solemn.—"I feel as if we had been years away," observed Louisa, patting Juno's head, as she drew her chair towards the fire after dinner, "and rejoice to meet all my old friends, Juno, and the tables and chairs, as after a long separation; and to-morrow I can go see the Villars's and poor old Molly: old John, I dare say, will be here at daybreak, if he hears his 'pretty Miss Louisa' is come home.—But, mamma, why are you so sad? I am really happy to be at home, though my thoughts are a little on the road to London; but he will soon be here. Oh! why will you not smile, mamma, and make it quite home?"

"I am going, my love," said Mrs. Mandeville, "to undertake a task most painful to us both—to relate to you my own sad story."

Instantly the gaiety of Louisa's countenance was exchanged for serious tenderness, as, withdrawing the hand which had been playfully entangled in Juno's shaggy hair, she softly threw her arms around her mother's neck, and whispered—"Oh! how often have I wished it!"

"So painful has the subject ever been to me," said Mrs. Mandeville, "and so tenderly has my dear one ever avoided to press me on it, that you are, I believe, ignorant of every part of my history. I had scarcely attained my fifteenth year, when, with the interval of but a few months, I saw both my beloved parents consigned to the grave. All my former life cherished by the fondest parental tenderness, at once I found myself an orphan, unknown—unloved by the few relations I possessed. A few days after the last of these tremendous strokes, I received a letter from my uncle, informing me, that, as my nearest relation, his house was my proper residence, and appointing a time when I should be ready to accompany the person he would send to bring me to

London; the letter ended with explanations of accounts, from which I first learned that I possessed a small portion.

"The cold and heartless strain from my father's brother indeed struck a chill to a heart, whose warm affections had hitherto been cherished by a return the most tender. My parents indeed had many friends, who kindly offered me shelter and protection; but naturally timid, I felt an irrational terror in my present situation, and I yielded to the peremptory claim of my uncle. How sad—how lost were my feelings when I entered the great city, and saw moving before me the ceaseless multitude, in not one individual of whom the lately-cherished favourite of the village could claim a moment's interest! The gay shops—the brilliant equipages—the busy faces of their inhabitants, all awakened a sense of the most desolate wretchedness: nor was it in any degree removed when I entered the dwelling I was hitherto to call my home, where I met a reception equally distant and polite.

"My uncle, a mere man of the world—my aunt, the gay worshipper of pleasure, could not find much interest in soothing affliction they partook not of; but one feeling they seemed to have, in common with those I lamented—it was parental affection; and it was to the kind interference of their only son I owed the little tenderness I received from them. From the first moment of our acquaintance he had shewn me marked and uniform affection; and can you wonder, in the desolate state of my feelings, that I gratefully accepted his attentions, even though the manner of them was disagreeable, and he, in himself, peculiarly unpleasing to me?

"Week after week I found myself unnoticed—unthought of, but by my cousin James. This consciousness is my only excuse for conduct which I have ever looked back to with regret. James left London on necessary business; with him I seemed to lose my only friend, and my expression of this feeling, in answer to his vehement exclamations of sorrow at leaving me, was perhaps too strong. He evidently admired me, and the loss of his attentive care I sensibly felt; but not even he seemed *really* to love me; is it wonderful, then, that my mind was easily susceptible of attachment to the first person who seemed really to feel it for me, when that person possessed all that, had not his love won my heart, had commanded my highest esteem and admiration? I dare not dwell on it, even at this distance of time—it was colonel Mandeville. I loved, in the fullest sense of the word—I loved with mingled tenderness and esteem; and I had known him but a short time when I heard from his lips, what I had often gathered from his manner—that I was beloved. He desired me to demand my uncle's consent to an immediate marriage; and then, in answer to my repeated inquiries, informed me, that his family violently opposed it, partly on account of the smallness of my fortune, and partly on account of a family enmity. This, however, he said, he felt no obstacle; he was, like myself, an orphan, therefore would break no filial tie; and for his relations, he said that he painfully felt the unpleasantness to me of entering a family not prepared to welcome me. He then wrote to my uncle a letter, which I was to deliver, having first obtained my promise to see him again in the evening.

"I believe it was fated to me, that from the hour of my parents' death I should never know unmingled felicity: even the happy moment in which I received the vows of the being dearest to me on earth, was darkened by the consciousness, that for me he was alienating from himself a family, to whom I knew him to be warmly attached.

Not one doubt however of the consent of my uncle and aunt, who had never seemed to find the least enjoyment in my presence, occurred to me, as I entered his study with Mandeville's letter; but to my equal astonishment and pain, when he had read it over, he expressed his surprise at my having been its bearer, and blamed my coquettish pleasure, as he termed it, in the addresses of colonel Mandeville, under the tacit engagement which, he said, subsisted between me and his son.

I stood fixed to the spot, from the dreadful feeling of self-condemnation, as I recollected the open pleasure with which I had accepted his very marked attentions, and the expressions of far more than cousin's tenderness in his letters, which had, since my knowledge of Mandeville, been quite unnoticed; and it was long before I could obtain courage to tell his father, that till that moment I had never been even conscious of his regard for me, and that, however I might lament the result of my blindness—however gratefully feel his partiality, that I could never be his; in short, I confessed that my affections were fixed on another.

"They accused me of having, in vanity, used every artifice to win a heart of which I had ever been unworthy, and blamed their own weak indulgence, in not having at once banished me their house, on the first appearance of this unhappy attachment. My uncle desired me then to quit it before the return of his son, who was expected home that day.

"Horror, at the idea of appearing to colonel Mandeville as a houseless wanderer, so far lowered my pride, as to enable me to entreat shelter for that night. It was granted, and I retired to my apartment; but scarcely had I reached it, when my cousin's carriage stopped at the door, and I heard his voice speaking in angry tones with his parents: presently he came up stairs, and entreated to see me.

"Conscious of having injured him, though most unintentionally, I appeared before him, trembling like a criminal.—'Julia!' he exclaimed, seizing my hands, 'you are mine—mine, by your own tacit consent—mine, by the wishes of your guardian!'

"I assured him, that I had never, for one moment, thought of him as a lover, and repeated what I had said to his father.

My uncle violently forced him from me, and reminded me that I had asked and obtained shelter for but one night.

"In short, Louisa, thus forsaken by my own family, and rejected by his, I was, in a manner, forced into a clandestine marriage; and trembling, terrified, doubtful whether I was not acting against the dictates of duty, I became the wife of a man whose affection was as honourable as it was dear to me.

"I wrote to my uncle, to implore his forgiveness for the only child of his brother; while Mandeville went to announce our marriage to some of his relations in London: he returned pale and dejected, but his eyes glancing unusual pride.—'Julia,' he said, 'they refuse to receive you—they will not even see my wife; but weep not, dearest,' headded, the severity of his haughty countenance relaxing into melting tenderness—'we shall be more happy—more entirely all of this earth to each other.'

"And we were so; Mandeville's proud heart revolted from the idea of farther seeking the pardon we were denied, and we agreed in preferring solitude to any society, since we were denied that of our relations. He obtained leave of absence from his regiment, then in London, and for one year we lived, as he said, all in all to each other. It was then, my Louisa, I learned the love which now centres in you: my heart had been divided between my parents, but from that period one single object has possessed it. Oh! I was wrong in saying I never knew unmingled happiness: during that year nothing was wanting—nothing could have been added —but it was short—he was ordered abroad.

"Isolated, lost to all but him, what were my feelings then? they were what they now would be, were I commanded for ever to lose sight of my Louisa. I was in a situation which made travelling impossible for me. I was to lose him. In vain the lion-hearted Mandeville, ever foremost to meet the enemy, implored permission to remain in England for three months longer; he might then have carried with him his wife and child; but the moment was too critical for an officer so brave, so judicious, and so beloved, to be absent. Oh! how I then lamented the attachment of his soldiers, which I had gloried in as a noble tribute to his worth! but how could *I* wonder that his presence was necessary to inspire the hearts of others? My own now sunk within me; and now, when he was about to leave me, in a state so needing tenderness, his proud spirit bowed to implore it for me of his relations; but they refused to notice me while he lived, promising, if he fell, I and my infant should be provided for and protected. My own relations were still more inexorable. The friends of my childhood indeed offered me a kind asylum, but I could not quit the spot where I should most readily hear of him, and whence I could most easily follow him.

"He went; the full weight of woe burst at once upon me, and that Mandeville, who had ever been first to encourage his men to action and to glory, now lingered to the last sad moment, to whisper comfort to his wife.

"He had placed me in respectable lodgings, in the care of a kind, attentive woman, with whom he had left a thousand directions respecting me, and a thousand charges to write him daily accounts of me and his child during my confinement.

"Six weeks passed in a degree of happiness; I had two occupations most dear to me—reading and answering his letters, and preparing for our expected treasure.

"Every paper was filled with the glory of the English arms, and with praises of the distinguished bravery of his regiment, and hours of every day I spent in reading them over and over—dear, but fatal pleasure! Every day brought my illness perceptibly more near. My Louisa, I wish to dwell on this time, when I possessed something of Mandeville, but I must go on. With eager delight, about two months after I had lost him, I was reading of a glorious engagement, in which the English arms had been victorious, and my fond heart glowed with the idea, that to one of those heroes so extolled, I was more dear than all his fame, when, at once, the world became a blank desert before me—he had fallen!"

Mrs. Mandeville paused in strong emotion for several minutes, and then continued—" In the wildness of despair, I was supported by the idea that an event so horrible could not be real. I rushed from the house, I believe with the intention of obtaining farther information at the war-office; but I had not proceeded through many streets, when I sunk down, overpowered by the exertion. My senses deserted me, but I suppose some charitable passenger, seeing my situation, and not knowing my residence, had conveyed me to the lying-in hospital, for there I found myself when returned to consciousness. My orphan child was soon placed in my arms."

" And did I then comfort you, mamma?" asked Louisa.

Mrs. Mandeville clasped her to her

heart.—"When I gazed on it, and thought of the father who would so tenderly have blessed my child, my senses again forsook me.

"Another day of unconsciousness had passed, and when I called for my babe, the nurse seemed unwilling to grant my request; but when I wildly demanded it, if it lived, she doubtfully advanced with a sleeping infant in her arms. It was almost dark, and pressing the dear one to my bursting heart, I called for light to gaze again on the features which I thought so strongly resembled those so beloved. The nursetender refused it, under the pretence of its being injurious to my eyes; and that night, my Louisa, while you received sustenance from my bosom—while I soothed your feeble cry, I prayed for strength to struggle with affliction, and to devote my life to you. But morning dawned, and I eagerly availed myself of its light to see my child. Oh! how little do we know our real happiness! how dreadful were my feelings at that moment!

but my angel has since practically taught me to see that whatever is, is best. Dear one! I saw not the dark eyes and marked features of Mandeville's child—it was your blue eyes, my Louisa, which then smiled on me, and I was enabled to take to my heart the precious blessing of my after-life."

Louisa clung to her as though she thought that the knowledge that she was the child of another would, by some magic influence, part her from her arms; and long were the struggling tumults of her breast, before she could exclaim—"But am I not still yours, mamma?"

"Dearer—far dearer than ever *his* child now could be," energetically replied Mrs. Mandeville. "The nursetender," she continued, "afterwards related to me the circumstances of the exchange. While I was in a state unable to pay her the necessary attentions, the woman held my infant in her arms, and when called to a lady who wanted to inquire the character of a nurse, she carried it with her. The lady admired its singular beauty, and when she sent the woman back for further particulars, she begged to have it left in the carriage. When the nurse returned, she raised in her arms an infant wrapped in a magnificent shawl, which she desired her to keep for it as a present from her, and imprinting on its cheek a long and trembling kiss, she covered its head and returned it. The carriage then drove off; and when the nurse discovered the exchange, all clue to it was gone. How often have I been thankful for this, when I have felt the superiority of my darling over every other! You have seemed to me, my child, in every sorrow, as the messenger from Heaven, to remind me, that

> "Behind a frowning Providence,
> He hides a smiling face,"

since the greatest blessing of my existence I at first lamented as a misfortune. It has long been concealed, but now that you are about to become a wife, it must be known. Who your real parents were, I had no means of discovering, but I have sometimes thought——"

"I know!—I know!" exclaimed Louisa; "it is—it is——Oh, mamma! was I apparently dying, when I was given to you?"

"You were, my love; that, in part, bound my heart so closely to your infancy."

"Then it is lady Castlebrook, and lady Augusta is—oh, mamma!—surely not dearer than your own Louisa?"

"Never—no, never!" exclaimed Mrs. Mandeville, trembling with vehement agitation. "Often have I guessed the truth. It was lady Augusta's likeness to Mandeville so strongly interested me for her; but lady Castlebrook appeared so amiable—so incapable of such an act."

Louisa then repeated all that she had heard from lady Castlebrook, which she had endeavoured to believe merely the ravings of fever, but which now appeared as the confession of a dreadful truth; and clasped in each other's arms, Mrs. Mandeville and Louisa collected together all the circumstances which proved lady Castlebrook and lady Augusta to properly claim the maternal right in one, and the filial tie to the other.—"And, oh, mamma!" said Louisa, "surely you will not be so anxious to aknowledge the child of my—of colonel Mandeville, as instantly to yield me up to another. Oh! I have loved her dearly, but still she is not my mother—I mean she is not you, mamma."

"Nor, alas!' is lady Augusta my Louisa, but she is *his* child. Oh! there is much—much in that feeling. To recover the child of Mandeville—my own!—but, oh! had she been such as my angel—my nursling—no, even his child can never be so dear—Oh, my Louisa! it is a strange mixture of feeling—lady Castlebrook indeed may rejoice!"

Louisa shrieked.—"And shall I at once be given up—at once lose my guardian guide, and enter on so many trials? Oh, mamma!—mamma!——But no! if you can see the child of Mandeville still bear another name—still unconscious that to you she owes existence, I may still be yours. She may still hold her splendid station, lady Castlebrook may be spared the sad confession, and all may be tranquil —happy as before."

"And Harcourt?" said Mrs. Mandeville.

"Louisa, whether the heiress of Castlebrook, or the child of poverty, is equally dear to him; and I feel pride—delight, in being raised by the man I love—it gives such confidence, though were I heiress of the Indies, I could never doubt his sincerity. But, oh, mamma, when you consider the difference of our education! I should sink under the splendour lady Augusta so gracefully adorns. Nature intended the exchange. Oh, mamma," she added, throwing herself on Mrs. Mandeville's neck, "can you still be content with your Louisa?"

"Can I be content," repeated Mrs. Mandeville, "with the greatest treasure Heaven ever bestowed on favoured mortal? But oh, my child, you will one day know a mother's peculiar feelings."

"And I should be just to a mother," said Louisa, her countenance falling as she spoke. "Yes, mamma, take your happy child, and let me follow the path of duty, and return to her who gave me birth. Yet, to acknowledge me, must bring shame on her honoured head. Lord Castlebrook too—my father! Oh, mamma! guide me—guide me!"

"How can I guide," said Mrs. Mandeville, "where I am myself unable to think? My heart beats with an emotion indescribable—unutterable, towards the child who owes her breath to me; she is flesh of my flesh. But, oh! she is not the dear nursling whose flitting life was preserved by my care—who received sustenance from my bosom—who has for eighteen years been the blessing, the joy of my existence. Were the question, whether I should give up my Louisa, or remain unknown to my daughter, my heart would decide; for she was only born of me; it was you who received and repaid all the tender cares of a mother; yet it would be a hard struggle; but since I may still claim from you——"

"But, mamma," interrupted Louisa, her eyes sparkling with renewed delight, "we have no certainty. Remember, that all lady Castlebrook said may have been only delirium—such likenesses as mine to Harcourt, and lady Augusta's to my father (oh, let me call him so again!), are frequent, without any relationship. As Harcourt says, resemblance of disposition —indeed, a thousand things, confirm me in the idea that we are mistaken—that I may again be only yours; and if—if at any future period your real daughter should appear, perhaps, mamma, she may be one to whom——though lady Augusta is very amiable."

Louisa spoke as earnestly, and felt as much desire that her present doubt might be just, as if the discovery of her real parents was to cast her into beggary, instead of raising her to the wealth and splendour which, could it have been possessed as the child of Mrs. Mandeville, she would have felt fond delight in bestowing on the man who had chosen her portionless and untitled.

" But," said Mrs. Mandeville, " should this enchanting, unhappy lady Castlebrook, who possessed such power over your feelings, prove to be your mother, would my Louisa willingly leave her unsoothed and desolate as she is? Should we not, before we return to our former tranquillity, endeavour to discover whether our first suspicions were just?"

" You are very willing to part with me," said Louisa, bursting into tears; but quickly conscious of her own injustice, she added—" Oh, mamma, forgive me, if I am impatient—weak! it is my first trial, and I am not the heroine you fondly imagined me; but though I cannot be worthy of it, I will not disgrace your tender care of me. Yes, mamma, I will consent to make this discovery; and should ady Castlebrook be my mother, and should ady Augusta be your child, they shall be oved by me as such."

"To-morrow then, my dearest love."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Louisa. "Oh, mamma!"

"Well then, as soon as we are both better able to bear the agitating trial, shew lady Castlebrook the shawl in which you were wrapped; if she recognizes it——"

Mrs. Mandeville paused, and tears, drawn forth by various feelings, flowed from her upraised eyes.

Louisa added—"If she does, my doom is fixed."

For the first time in her life, sleep was banished from the pillow of Louisa by uneasy reflection. At first, it was her earnest desire to delay, to the farthest possible, the eventful explanation; but before morning dawned, she told Mrs. Mandeville, that she believed it would be better, as she had said, to let it take place at once. She had promised to see lady Castlebrook that morning, and it was determined that she should wear the shawl, under a large wrapping cloak, which she should throw off when alone with her, if she found her sufficiently composed to bear the disclosure.

With a heart sinking with apprehension, yet trembling with a doubtful sense of joy, Mrs. Mandeville arranged the momentous covering.

Louisa dared not form a wish; she would not desire to remain estranged from her parents, and she could not desire to lose the maternal claim to Mrs. Mandeville. Pale, quivering, and perplexed, she threw herself into the arms of Mrs. Mandeville, and exclaimed—" Oh, mamma, inspire me with courage to leave you on such an errand !"

" Honour thy father and thy mother," answered Mrs. Mandeville, solemnly; " but still remember her who has hitherto held a parent's right in thee. I need not, dearest, repeat this charge. No, I shall still be dearer than all with her who with me must ever——Oh, my Louisa, affection like ours needs not the seal of words, nor the ties of blood."

"But you will promise me, mamma—— No, you need not promise it—that even *his* child shall never be so dear. Oh, mamma, think of the infant hands so often clasped in yours, the little voice that first called you mother, the child who first learned religion from your lips, and your example—whose every thought is but the shade of yours! Oh, mamma, if she is flesh of your flesh, I am soul of your soul: but perhaps it is all a groundless fear," she added; and this idea was indeed necessary to enable her to quit the arms which had so tenderly enfolded her infancy, to seek the parent who had cast her off.

As the carriage, which had been sent to convey her to Castlebrook, rolled forward, she endeavoured to keep her mind, as much as possible, in a state of chaos; but sometimes she thought the road had never appeared so long, and sometimes was ready to chide the postilion for his unusual swiftness.

"A thousand welcomes, my pretty Louisa," said lord Castlebrook, as, regardless of all pomp, he advanced to meet her. "I assure you, lady Castlebrook has thought every moment an hour until your expected visit."

She felt that the hand which grasped hers, the voice which so affectionately welcomed her, were those of a father, and she could scarcely restrain her first impulse of sinking on her knees to implore the paternal blessing.

"But why so agitated, my dear little girl?" he added, seriously. "I never before saw that calm brow discomposed, sweet Louisa. Has any thing troubled you?"

"No, nothing. May I see lady Castlebrook?" was all Louisa could utter.

He conducted her to the apartment where his lady was anxiously awaiting her arrival, and then left them together.

"Oh, you are come at last!" she exclaimed, tenderly, as she arose to embrace her.

Louisa's heart throbbed almost to bursting.

"Alas, my love!" said lady Castlebrook, "you are not well. You are too kind; you should not have left me until you were more recovered. Is it not strange, that while I am conscious that I injure you, and while I would give my life to preserve you from all harm, my heart is still open to you—a heart whose fatal secrets blanch your cheek, and shake your frame? You are silent, love. I will seek some other subject; but first speak to me. Let me hear those gentle tones that possess such magic influence. Sweetest, speak!"

Louisa with difficulty suppressed a shriek, as, with a sudden effort, she flung the cloak from her shoulders.

"Louisa," cried lady Castlebrook, "that shawl! Where? When?"

"At my birth," answered Louisa, almost inaudibly.

Lady Castlebrook uttered a faint exclamation of thankfulness, and sunk senseless at the feet of her daughter.

Louisa knelt beside her, and, as her tears bedewed the face of her mother, she forgot all the pangs which had torn her breast, in the idea that in recovering her real parents, she must own other influence than that of Mrs. Mandeville.—" My mother! my mother!" she cried, in accents of melting tenderness.

Lady Castlebrook soon revived, and finding herself supported in the arms of Louisa, she sunk from them again on the ground, and clasping her hands in supplication, she exclaimed—" You know not what you do; you know not that this tenderness is lavished on a wretch who cast you from her. Oh, say that you can forgive me the worst of crimes, before I can tell you that I am—that I am——" Her feeble hands convulsively grasped Louisa's arm.

" That you are my mother," said Louisa. " Mamma has told me all. Receive, embrace your child!"

" And can you forgive me?" asked [illegible]y Castlebrook, concealing her face in [illegible]isa's shawl.

"Forgive you!" repeated she, tenderly; "what have I to forgive?"

"True, Louisa," replied her mother, "my guilt was, under Providence, the means of consigning you to better, more judicious, but not more tender care than your mother's might have been."

"But Providence," said Louisa, her eyes overflowing with tears of grateful tenderness towards that friend she might no longer call her mother, "watched over both my parents and myself, to preserve me from all ill; and I was given to one from whom I have received all that they could have wished bestowed on me: then cease to look towards the painful past, and enjoy the happy present."

"And may I then," said lady Castlebrook, "rejoice in the presence of my injured child—Louisa! *my* Louisa—my child! now all my own!" and throwing herself wildly into the arms of her daughter, she fell into hysterical sobbing.

Louisa sought to tranquillize her by all the tender arts she had been used to employ to soothe and win from sorrowful reflection the mind of Mrs. Mandeville; and at length, terrified lest the sounds should call others to the apartment before any plan had been arranged, she exclaimed—"Lord Castlebrook!—lady Augusta!"

"Lord Castlebrook!" she repeated, mournfully, and starting back; "and must he know all? Oh, he will despise, detest me! But it matters not, if he will receive my child. Oh, Louisa, pity, but do not hate me! To be unworthy of my child! Oh, Louisa!"

"At least," said Louisa, when her caresses had in some degree calmed her, "do not mention it to lord Castlebrook, until——"

"Your father, Louisa," interrupted lady Castlebrook; "still let me hear the dear sound repeated—your father, your mother! Oh, call me so once more, my child, my child!"

"Let not my loved mother," said Louisa, "in the first emotion of her feelings, hat we may here-

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ouisa remained until her soft endear-
ent had calmed, and her pious and affectionate reasoning had soothed her; and then having prevailed on her to let the discovery continue a secret from lord Castlebrook, until they could farther consult on the means of announcing it, and until she was better able to bear the agitation, she arose to leave her.

"And am I so soon again to lose you?" cried lady Castlebrook, clasping her in her arms. "I shall feel as if it had been but a vision. Oh, better is all the confession can bring on my guilty head, than thus to only half-possess my child!"

"But think," said Louisa, "what mamma's anxiety must be to know the result of my visit."

"Yes," answered lady Castlebrook, "I should indeed consider the feelings of Mrs. Mandeville, blessed guardian of your infancy! blessed instructor of your youth! Oh, Louisa, can I ever hope that you will love me as you love her?"

"Yes," answered Louisa, "with reverence, with tenderness, with devotion."

As she passed from the apartment, she was met by lady Augusta, who had not at first known of her arrival; a sensation of tenderness, with which the haughty lady Augusta Delamore had never inspired her, thrilled with strong emotion through Louisa's breast; she regarded her with new eyes as Augusta Mandeville—the daughter of the venerated man she had hitherto called father, and of the woman she most loved on earth; she raised her eyes to endeavour to trace in her features the resemblance to Mrs. Mandeville she had so often vainly sought in her own.

Lady Augusta looked dejected, though, for the moment, rejoiced at seeing her; and Louisa imagined something of her mother's sweetness in her languid smile. Throwing herself into her arms, she burst into tears.

With affectionate earnestness lady Augusta inquired the cause of her emotion.

"You have not asked for mamma," replied Louisa, unable to give a direct answer, and anxious instantly to awaken for Mrs. Mandeville in the breast of her child all the devoted tenderness she had been accustomed to.

"Believe me, it is not want of affection has withheld me then," said lady Augusta; "but I know she is well, or her sweet physician and comforter would not be here. Were I capable of envy, Louisa, you should be its object, for the possession of such a parent. My mother is——"

"All that should inspire the most warm attachment," interrupted Louisa, unable to bear a breath of censure, either on the real or supposed mother of lady Augusta.

"Perhaps you are right," she replied; "perhaps the blame should rather be cast on my rank—my elevated situation, which, till accident introduced me to you, and your charming mother, had placed me almost above the familiar confidence of friendship. In my own rank, I have never yet met a person, unless it be my father, whom I could really love; and yet, Louisa, you will think me little less than a maniac, when I say it, and yet I would not willingly change places with you, the happiest of human beings."

"It is indeed strange," said Louisa, colouring; "and, forgive me, lady Augusta, it is wrong—your mind must be too much bound to this world, when you can prefer its splendour, and its homage, to what you yourself acknowledge heartfelt happiness—to the possession, for instance, of such a parent as mamma. Where the heart is rightly regulated, its pleasures here are found in the affections—in those ties which will survive mortality, not in the frivolous trifles which perish with this 'wreath of clay.' My dear lady Augusta, try to overcome this vain taste, unworthy such a mind as yours. Make yourself such as a parent, tender as mamma, would wish you. You may be all she could desire, and be so. Dearest lady Augusta, forget the narrow prejudices of education, and stand forward your better self. Nature has raised you high above the consideration of your outward advantages; you may stand high above the idle worshippers of worldly honours—you may feel conscious dignity; but, oh, let it be as yourself, not as the heiress of Castlebrook!"

Louisa spoke with an energy and decision unusual to her meek spirit, which generally shrunk abashed under the haughty glance and tone of lady Augusta; but now her heart was interested, and where her affections, or her principles, were called into action, all the minor considerations, the little outworks of her mind, were forgotten.

"To you," said lady Augusta, "that I should take pride and pleasure in a situation in which I confess I have little heartfelt enjoyment, must appear a strange paradox; but, my dear Louisa, you have not been educated as I have. You have not been taught from infancy to hold a long race of ancestors as your highest pride; your infant ear did not learn to thrill at their lofty titles, and their deeds of glory; you did not learn to regard your duty towards them as the first of duties. You cannot imagine or enter into my feelings—to you, 'the magic of a name' must be unknown, and it has a power to you incomprehensible. My first wish was, in beauty and talents, to resemble Edith of Castlebrook; my second is, that the husband of her descendant may be worthy of the family that unites with his. The feelings which with you have turned to filial piety, with me were taught to fix on the honour of my illustrious ancestors. Yes, Louisa, with as strict a sense of duty as you obey the wishes of your mother, I adhere to the glory of my noble house." The dejection of her countenance vanished while she spoke on the subject, which ever most deeply interested her; but after a pause she sighed, and continued—"And could you read my heart, Louisa, you would learn to esteem what you now condemn. My principles may, as you say, be ill-directed, but they are pure, steady, and high, as your own."

Louisa felt extreme pain at these words; her unswerving principles forced her to condemn the conduct of those she most wished to approve; and now all the faults with which a false education had sullied the naturally-fine mind of lady Augusta, she felt with double bitterness, from the anxiety she felt for her as the child of Mrs. Mandeville, and the tender interest that anxiety had awakened for her as an individual.

For several days Louisa continued seeing her mother, and receiving from her every mark of enthusiastic fondness; but as yet nothing was arranged for their future plans. At times lady Castlebrook determined at once to confess the truth to her lord, but then the apprehension that his strong attachment to lady Augusta would render him unwilling to acknowledge her child, deterred her, and she continued in a state of feverish agitation, every day meeting Louisa with new intentions, and giving them up before they parted.

In the meantime, Mrs. Mandeville, on the same motive, dreading a sudden disclosure, endeavoured to see Augusta, without betraying any remarkable agitation; but this was a kind of pause which could not long continue.

Lord Harcourt, on reaching London, found that his father was absent; so that for a few days his letters to Louisa contained nothing of intelligence; they only lamented the cheerless strain of hers, or chid the reserve of her style, occasioned by her inability to communicate the feelings which chiefly occupied her mind; but at length the momentous letter arrived, which informed her that lord Ennerdale had absolutely refused his consent.

Harcourt had determined to remain another week in London, and if he found him still resolute, to return to Castlebrook, and there, under the auspices of his relations, of whose approbation he had not a moment's doubt, to make Louisa his; he knew that his father's anger chiefly arose from the idea, that but for this attachment, he would have obtained the hand of the heiress of Castlebrook; and he trusted to her avowed approbation of his choice for the restoration of his favour.

"Then here, my child," said Mrs. Mandeville, "must end our concealment."

"No, mamma," replied Louisa, firmly, though her cheek was pale, and her lip quivered from agitation, "never shall Harcourt's wife become so without the full certainty of ' approving Heaven.' Never shall his nuptials bring sorrow on a mother's head. No, mamma, they would be unhallowed, and it shall not be."

"And will you give him up, Louisa? Do you conceive that filial duty can require the sacrifice of——"

"No, I trust I need not," she answered; "but certainly I should do so for the present, rather than force her to a confession which might at this moment for ever estrange the affections of her husband. Could the daughter expect wedded happiness, purchased at the destruction of her mother's?"

Another cause, which she did not name, well aware that Mrs. Mandeville would not give ear to it, strongly actuated her; she felt that Augusta's attachment to her mother daily increased, but that it was not yet strong enough to bear the shock of the explanation; and for this strength she partly trusted to her farther knowledge of Mrs. Mandeville, and partly to the arguments she hourly poured into her ear against the haughty principles in which she had been reared, to which lady Augusta seemed every day to give more attention. But though fixed and determined in the path of duty, Louisa was no heroine of romance; she did not, for the generous concealment of another's guilt, give herself the appearance of it in the eyes of the man whose heart she well knew would bleed in the idea of her fickleness or uncertainty; she might, to preserve her mother's high place in the opinion of her valued young relation, have endured all the pangs she herself would suffer in his lowered esteem; but she would not inflict on him the anguish of believing her less perfect than he had felt her.

When he came, however, dejected under the disapprobation of a beloved parent, yet almost rejoicing in it as an opportunity of proving to Louisa the force and sincerity of his attachment, her strength was called to a severe trial. How could she at once crush all the hopes which had supported him under paternal displeasure?

Her agitation and anxiety for his feelings gave a tenderness to her manner, which soothed while it increased his disappointment; as, first receiving his promise not to betray her confidence, she related to him all she knew from Mrs. Mandeville, and all she had gathered from lady Castlebrook, of her motives for the action, dwelling with peculiar emphasis on her penitence, and on all the advantages she had herself derived from the tender care of Mrs. Mandeville, as the best means of reconciling Harcourt to his hitherto favourite relation.

To his representations that this could make no difference while she was yet unacknowledged by her father, and that, as Louisa Mandeville, she might yet be his, she answered that, independent of the, to her, insurmountable objection of separating a son from a parent, who, though now irritated, was devotedly attached to him, she felt, that in such a union she would be doubly guilty; her mother must either endure the agony of seeing her despised, clandestinely enter a family where, but for her guilt, she would have been welcomed with transport, or be forced to a premature disclosure, which might destroy her peace, and probably for ever alienate the affections of lady Augusta from Mrs. Mandeville: Mrs. Mandeville too, her far more than mother, should she inflict on her unerring mind a doubt as to the rectitude of her own conduct, by forcing her either to see her hurried into an action so degrading, by difficulties which it was in her power to obviate, or by the instant avowal of the truth, to, perhaps irreparably, destroy the happiness of another, and certainly injure her own?

"You are right, my Louisa," said Harcourt, with tears of tender admiration; "I have loved you as the loveliest—I shall venerate you as the most exalted of women; and, dearest, I have caught some of your heroism. I cannot remain here without injury to you—I will force myself this moment from you; and hear my prophecy—our meeting will be a happy one." He wrung her hand and left her.

The next morning, anxious to strengthen her resolution, by the sight of the beloved object for whom so much had been sacrificed, Louisa's daily visit to her mother was paid at a much earlier hour than usual. She found her alone, more than common emotion agitating her beautiful features.

When the first transports which always followed Louisa's entrance were past, she said—" And now, my child, I must make an inquiry for which I have never yet been able to collect courage. Tell me, Louisa, tell me of Harcourt—of his father. Have you not been rejected as the portionless daughter of an untitled family?"

" I have," she answered, tremulously, " but Harcourt's generous heart was unswayed by such considerations; he was as happy in the love of Louisa Mandeville, as he can be in that of the heiress of Castlebrook."

"And have you consented, scorned and rejected, to become his wife?" exclaimed lady Castlebrook—"you, on whose bridal pomp all the splendour of rank, of wealth, of illustrious birth, should have smiled, blessing the union which now —— Oh, Louisa, to what have I exposed you! Oh, let me go this moment—let me tell him that——"

Louisa interrupted her.—"I have not accepted Harcourt on such terms; he felt and approved my motives, for to him I have confided all."

"Already!" cried lady Castlebrook; "and does the beloved of my child already detest her guilty mother?"

Louisa calmed her with assurances of his perfect forgiveness.

"Generous children!" she exclaimed, "how have I deserved such kindness! Oh, my Louisa, because you have been rescued from the lion's den, is she who cast you there less guilty? And you forgive me, even while unconscious of the motives which may, in some degree, exculpate me; perhaps believing that the vain pride of bringing heirs to this noble house had actuated me:—but no—for five years I had lived tortured by the loss of the new-found blessing; four lovely infants were born to me, and all in the same manner perished, before I had one month been blessed with them. My heart clung to the idea of a child, with a kind of wild tenderness, of which those who have not experienced similar misfortunes cannot form a conception. My heart was just taught maternal love, when its precious object was removed. You were born at a time when your father was absent for several days; I gazed on you—I watched you with feverish hope; my arms never relinquished you—my eyes never closed in sleep, while I could gaze on you with one ray of hope for future happiness; but I saw your little life sinking away, as I had seen that of my other darlings. I believe my brain became confused by the agony of my heart. To see you expire, to see you borne from my bosom to the grave, was more than I could bear. At once the tremendous idea took possession of my mind, of obtaining a living child, even at the loss of your remaining hours; in vain were all the expostulations of Morton, to whom I instantly communicated my plan; with the fierce impatience of a maniac, I persisted in it. I believe she feared for my senses. My own carriage left me at a shop, where I was not known, whence we procured a hired coach, which took us to the Lying-in Hospital. My heart swelled over my child with a passionate fondness, which had almost determined me to retract, and for the melancholy indulgence of receiving your last sigh, to give up every hope for the future; but the nurse appeared, carrying an infant of unequalled beauty.

" My dreadful plan was then almost relinquished, and I merely asked for it for the pleasure of caressing it; but while the woman was gone into the house to make some inquiries which Morton directed, its smile, the healthful movement of its limbs, again fixed my resolution*. I remember wrapping you in that shawl, but no more; my reason left me, and I was carried home senseless. For several months I continued in that state of mental derangement which attends the highest degree of nervous fever. Every pang that rent my bosom for my lost babe, echoed on my heart with redoubled force for the mother I had deprived of hers.

"Morton too, in pity for my self-accusations, as the murderer of my child, assured me that she doubted not its life might be preserved by the change, as the heated atmosphere in which, on account of their natural delicacy, I had persisted in keeping my children, might have had an injurious effect.

"To what worse than death then had I exposed you! Perhaps to infamy — to eternal destruction! Oh, Louisa, I have mingled in society, I have conversed, I have seemed cheerful, but still the idea that perhaps my child lived—lived to misery, has haunted me like a phantom. Every shivering mendicant I saw filled me with horror, that such might be the rightful heiress of Castlebrook. How much of the charity, for which I have blushed to receive undue praises, has flowed from this dreadful source! At other moments I calmed myself with the idea that her little breath seemed just escaping when I parted from her, and tranquillized with regarding her as in her quiet grave, my mind resumed a degree of composure, which lasted until some interesting youthful face again awakened it to agony.

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* This fact occurred at a lying-in hospital not many years since; the exchange was also of female children.

"When I recovered, as much as I ever recovered, from my first derangement, I found that my lord had contracted the most fond parental affection for his beautiful little heiress; she became his idol, and I would not deprive him of a happiness I so well knew how to value. She was a lovely child, and among my other tortures, I have frequently reproached myself for my failure in the duty I had voluntarily contracted towards her; I attended indeed to her instruction, but I could not feel towards her the meltings of a mother's tenderness, and consequently could not awaken in her breast the softness of nature, which expands only in domestic endearment, and of which she was not deficient, if it had been properly cherished.

"The fondness of lord Castlebrook was too much mingled with pride in her beauty and talents, as his heiress, to counteract this evil; and I am painfully conscious that she is less happy and less amiable than she might have been.

"When I saw you, my Louisa, I at once felt you a person I could really love. Occasional glances of likeness to your father and my former self, with your singular resemblance to my favourite Harcourt, fixed my preference; but your mother's situation in life for some time prevented the most distant suspicion of the truth;

and always dreading the subject, I never noticed to my lord your extraordinary resemblance to our family, the want of which he had frequently lamented in Augusta.

" As I became more intimate with you, my wish that such might be my child, if yet she lived, strengthened into a hope; and I often wished, yet dreaded, to inquire into the history of Mrs. Mandeville's life, to discover if she had reason to suspect an exchange of her child for that of its nurse, as by this means I conceived a possibility of my daughter having been consigned to her. However, this seemed an improbability so wild, that I dared not found any serious hope on it, and heard Harcourt's declaration of attachment to you with all the pangs of conscience which the failure of his engagement with Augusta was calculated to inflict; for him I had felt something more nearly resembling maternal tenderness than I had ever felt for her; and my conscience found a relief for the wrong I had done him, by the intervention of a surreptitious heir, in the hope of restoring to him his rights with her in marriage.

"Oh, my Louisa! into how much guilt does one crime lead us! My reason told me that they were utterly unsuited to each other; but I shut my eyes to the truth which glared in them; and had you not interposed, like an angel of light, to disperse the clouds your mother's guilt had caused, Augusta's proud spirit had now been indignantly struggling against a control her heart acknowledged not, and Harcourt had been lost to the enjoyments of domestic life he can so well appreciate; but happy chance brought my outcast child to my arms, and Harcourt to the felicity he alone is worthy of."

Louisa endeavoured to direct her mother's gratitude to a higher power than that of "chance," and while she yet spoke, the earnestness of her feelings sparkling in her eloquent countenance, lord Castlebrook entered the room.

Coldly receiving, and instantly dropping her offered hand, he presented her with a letter.—"As this chiefly relates to you, Miss Mandeville," he said, "I request you to peruse it at once, to spare me the pain of repeating its contents, and to enable you to form your own judgment of them."

Louisa read it. It was from lord Ennerdale, informing him that his son had confessed to him an attachment to a person in the neighbourhood of Castlebrook, and entreating his interference with the young woman, since with Harcourt it was vain, to save him from a disgraceful marriage. It concluded thus—"I am well aware, that his having turned his thoughts towards such an object must for ever preclude the possibility of the alliance I so ardently desired for him; but though now unworthy of lady Augusta Delamore, Harcourt is a noble youth—an honour to his race; and I am convinced your lordship will use your utmost influence to save him from the only disgrace he can ever incur. He says this person's birth is highly respectable, her character spotless and exemplary, her information extensive, her principles upright and honourable, and that great beauty is her least charm—that she is generous and disinterested. Could I believe all this, I could overlook her want of fortune and title, in consideration of his romantic attachment; but how could she, without the deepest art, have lured his affection from the peerless lady Augusta Delamore, of whose charms and merit he was at first duly sensible?"

"Am I right, Miss Mandeville," said lord Castlebrook, when she had silently returned the letter, "in the conjecture that you are the lady here alluded to—this formidable rival of lady Augusta Delamore?"

"I am, my lord," answered Louisa, with modest firmness.

"Then here, I believe," he continued, looking at the letter, "lord Ennerdale's objections end; Miss Mandeville's birth is highly respectable, her information is extensive, her great beauty is her least charm; she appears generous and disinterested, and her principles and character have been upright and spotless."

"Have been, my lord!" proudly repeated Louisa.

"Yes, madam," he replied; "I have always believed it. What the powers were which induced lord Harcourt to falsify his engagement with lady Augusta Delamore you are the best judge."

"The powers of worth, of attraction, of every endearing feminine virtue," cried lady Castlebrook.

Her husband looked at her—"I conceive, Theodosia," he said, "that Miss Mandeville's own reason will judge her more correctly than her enthusiastic friend. Speak, Miss Mandeville."

Louisa's heart swelled at interrogations thus proudly made; but she recollected that a father uttered them, and she mildly answered—"I know not precisely what; I only know it was not artifice."

"I believe it, Louisa," said lord Castlebrook; but quickly catching the half-uttered words, he continued—"I have no right to demand a confidence you are unwilling to bestow; probably, indeed from my knowledge of your character, I am very sure you have not acted incorrectly; but, at the same time, I conceive it due to the honour of my house, to Augusta Delamore, my daughter, and the heiress of Castlebrook, that the person who has possessed this magic, nameless power of captivation—this superiority of attraction, should not——"

Lady Castlebrook fell at his feet, and just uttering the words—"You know not what you do—a father!" she sunk senseless on the floor.

"Leave her, leave her, my lord, I implore you!" exclaimed Louisa. "When she is recovered, in the drawing-room I will answer all—every thing you can ask."

"I obey you, madam," said lord Castlebrook, with chill politeness, quitting the apartment.

Louisa's cares and caresses had their usual power over lady Castlebrook, who soon revived.—"And now I must leave you," she said, when she had placed her on the couch. "I promised to meet lord Castlebrook. I must only delay to implore you not to betray our secret; for my sake, my beloved mother, for the sake of your child, do not force me on lord Castlebrook, at a moment when he is so violently irritated against me. Promise me."

"I do promise whatever you desire," answered lady Castlebrook, clasping her in a long embrace.

Louisa hastily returned it, and followed her father.

"I believe I was saying, Miss Mandeville, at the moment we were interrupted," he said, "that though my high esteem and admiration for your character may in no degree be lessened, I feel it due to Augusta Delamore, that the person to whom her avowed suitor has attached himself should no longer continue the favourite intimate of her father's house. I believe we are both desirous that this agitating interview should conclude. Your carriage, madam, waits."

Louisa Delamore's pride rose in blushes even to her throbbing temples; but the chill of wounded filial affection instantly condensed the indignant blood, and pale as marble she prepared to obey him.

He led her in silence to the hall; there he paused—"My dear young friend," he kindly said, "you could not have a stronger proof of my regard, than the painful emotion I now feel, in doing what I conceive for the honour of Augusta, because it gives you uneasiness, and deprives us of the free enjoyment of your society. Sweet girl, may I—dare I hope that you feel my motives, and will still consider me your friend?"

"Would I might ever do so!" exclaimed Louisa, fervently grasping both his hands.

An action so vehement, from one so even, so tranquil, surprised him, but he affectionately returned the pressure, and replied—"Ever, always do; next to my own daughter, dear girl, you are the child of my heart."

Louisa blushed high as she asked—"And may I, sir, soon again meet my beloved lady Castlebrook?"

"Forgive me, Louisa," he replied, "if I say that Augusta is injured by the avowed preference of her own mother for a stranger."

"Will you despise me, my lord," said Louisa, with downcast eyes, and glowing cheeks, "if I venture another request?—May lady Augusta see mamma?"

"As lady Augusta desires," he answered. "My sweet Louisa, such a child as you are, of such a parent as yours, can forgive the perhaps-too-great pride and tenderness of a father's heart."

Louisa entered the carriage, and drove off.

Lord Castlebrook instantly wrote and dispatched a letter to lord Ennerdale, expressing his high opinion of the character of Miss Mandeville, but at the same time informing him, that under present circumstances he had felt it necessary to deprive his family of the pleasure they found in her society, by communicating to her the contents of his letter, and dispensing with her presence at Castlebrook.

He had indeed done violence to his feelings, in pursuing the conduct which his pride in his lovely heiress had prompted. The winning sweetness, the artless simplicity, of Louisa's appearance and character, had the more interested him, as he had always regarded her as one who could hold no competition with lady Augusta; but now he felt this negative charm was not the only one she possessed; the innocent countenance of Louisa, in which a pride he admired had forcibly struggled with a sorrow which endeared her, still rested on his mind. He could not return to his lady, whose feelings he knew had been deeply wounded; he was restless and uneasy.—"Dear innocent child," he thought, "how could I for one moment doubt her upright candour! how could I so cruelly accuse her of deception, and dim her pretty laughing eyes with tears! Surely this was not necessary to the pride of my daughter! To-morrow I will acknowledge to her my injustice, and my sorrow for it; but still I must force myself to continue this cruel estrangement, sad as it is, both to myself and Theodosia. In this, and in my letter to lord Ennerdale, I have acted correctly, since I have acted for the honour of Augusta."

Such were his feelings when lady Augusta entered; she inquired for Louisa, and hearing she was gone, expressed her hope that she should see her next day.

"No, Augusta," replied her father. "Consistently with the pride of a Delamore, you can never again be in intimacy with the person who has ensnared the affections of the man actually received in this castle as the suitor of its heiress. Lord Harcourt is the accepted lover of Miss Mandeville."

"I have long perceived it," said lady Augusta; "but, my dear father, independent of my strong attachment to Louisa, and her inestimable mother, my pride calls on me to request that, if she can be recalled, her intimacy here may never be diminished by such a consideration. Perhaps," she added, smiling, "our feudal ancestors might have declared enmity against the treacherous ally who had drawn away for his heiress the chevalier of ours; but in more civilized times, I should conceive myself degraded by a contest in which Edith of Castlebrook might have gloried. Delamore pride perhaps calls for war, but female dignity is best supported by pacific measures."

Lord Castlebrook was even more than ordinarily inclined to admire and coincide in her opinion; he went to his almost-distracted wife, and desired her to write a letter, which he would convey, entreating the return of their sweet young friend, with her mother.

Her gratitude and joy equalled the excess of her affliction; and never had she felt such ardent affection for her lord, or such tenderness for Augusta, as when she saw them set out the next day, to restore to her arms the precious child in whose presence she found a recompence for all her former sufferings; yet she longed for the time when the parent who now sought her as a friend, should embrace her as his child, and learn to fix his pride on her as his heiress.

Lord Castlebrook was not without apprehension that the pride of Louisa's gentle nature would lead her to reject his first overtures of reconciliation; and now the ready delight with which she accepted his invitation, he received with heartfelt pleasure, as a proof of the real affection which had conquered the pride naturally awakened by the circumstances; and that night, at Castlebrook, Mrs. Mandeville and Louisa fondly congratulated each other on the quick return of his affection, and on the daily increase of Augusta's respectful tenderness.

Lady Castlebrook now began to feel the necessity of farther establishing the affection of her father, before she suffered the eclaircissement to take place; and now that her mind was comparatively at ease about her daughter, the affection she naturally entertained for the child reared under her care, and her fervent gratitude to Mrs. Mandeville for her maternal love of her deserted infant, made her anxious in her arrangements to consider with Louisa their advantage.

Two days had passed at the castle, in apparently-tranquil happiness on all parts. Lady Augusta indeed had greatly lost the brilliant vivacity of her natural character; and frequently the watchful eye of Mrs. Mandeville observed the hasty colour rise and fall on her cheek, and a struggling sigh agitate her breast, when she usually retired, as if to conceal the momentary emotion; her mother knew its cause, and with thankfulness she rejoiced in the attachment which she would have herself, from her high opinion of Villars, wished to encourage, and which might help to reconcile her daughter to the loss of the lofty splendour she had been reared in, as freeing her from the trammels which now seemed to call on her to renounce the man she loved. Often she felt doubtful whether in suffering the mental conflict to continue, she was not rather actuated by the selfish pleasure of winning her affection, before she forcibly claimed it with maternal authority, and by the weak desire she felt of still even outwardly retaining all her rights in Louisa, than by care for the real interests of either of her children; yet she remembered how easily his preferable love of Augusta had turned the heart of lord Castlebrook against Louisa; she remembered that Augusta avowedly preferred her rank, with all its bonds and restraints, to a lower, in which the affections of her heart might fully expand, and she resolved to remain in silence, endeavouring, with Louisa, to turn her mind into a channel better suited to her real situation in life, and better calculated for her real happiness.

Mrs. Mandeville had believed that she loved Louisa as much as it was possible to love; but now, when she saw the lovely playful child the mild instructress of her faulty daughter, the pious guide of a mother's steps, sacrificing every selfish feeling to gratify those of her three parents, yet retaining all the artless simplicity, the childlike endearment of her character, she found that her former affection was capable of increase, at least that it was capable of taking a stronger, more respectful form. All the energies of her mind awakened, its too-great timidity thrown off by the constant play of her feelings, Louisa appeared only now to be known; her soft tenderness soothing every returning pang of her real mother; her sound sense and correct judgment clearing from the mind of Mrs. Mandeville every doubt as to her line of conduct; her interesting and rational conversation leading, but never forcing the thoughts of Augusta from painful and uncommunicated reflections—her playful gaiety and lively attention, as a listener, banishing from the brow of lord Castlebrook the gloom with which the visible dejection of lady Augusta frequently clouded it—her talents—her playfulness—her information, were ever ready to amuse or interest the mind. The smallest power she possessed, she knew to turn, when occasion called for it, to real use; and though indifferent to trifles, she never regarded as such any thing which could, in the lowest degree, contribute to the comfort, or prevent the slightest uneasiness, of any individual. Some might ridicule as frivolous, but all must themselves wish to experience, the delicacy of kindness, with which, in the most trifling instances, Louisa sought to spare the future feelings of her friend; the thought she bestowed, the thousand little arts she used, even to accustom her ear to the omission of her title, by calling her, as in fond familiarity, by her Christian name alone. Many will do a kind action, give a pleasurable sensation, for which they may receive gratitude or liking; but there are comparatively few who have the negative, and perhaps superior good-nature, of unobservedly sparing the feelings from pain.

It was on the third evening of their visit at Castlebrook, while the whole party, except lady Augusta, were assembled before dinner, that Morton appeared at the door, requesting to see Miss Mandeville. She told her that lady Augusta was very ill, and desired to see her.

" Ill, Morton !" repeated Louisa, who had parted from her in perfect health but an hour before—" in what manner ?"

With the spirit of an abigail, Mrs. Morton prepared a defence for her young mistress, though aware that the truth would appear, the moment they reached the apartment they were approaching; but finding the ground of an accidental walk, on a gloomy December evening, rather untenable, she shook her head in silence.

Louisa found her seated by a large fire, just disencumbered of her dripping garments, while her maid knelt at her feet, rubbing them with spirits; her long dark hair hung wet around her—she trembled violently, partly from the chill she had received, and partly from the strong emotion which was visible on her countenance. —"My dear Louisa," she said, "Morton insisted on calling you—I am very ill, and you can do something for me without telling—alarming my mother. Margaret," she added, addressing her maid, "Morton can take your place." She coloured high, as the woman arose to obey her; the idea of making a confidant of her attendant, in a circumstance concealed from her parents, was insupportable to her; yet she could not suffer it to reach their ears through such a channel, and grasping Louisa's hand, she exclaimed—"My father!"

Louisa caught her meaning, and said—

"Margaret, it is needless to alarm lord and lady Castlebrook, by informing them of your lady's illness, nor do not mention it in the servants' hall."

She left the room, and guessing lady Augusta's unwillingness to communicate the too-evident cause of the lonely walk, in which the shower had surprised her, Louisa aided and directed Morton's cares without making any inquiry. Having placed her in bed, she sent Morton for some whey.

Lady Augusta burst into tears, and kissing the hand which held hers, she said—"Dearest Louisa, I am not insensible of your tender kindness; in your silence and in your countenance I see that you suspect the truth; but tenderly guarding from pain the pride you condemn, you forbear to acknowledge your consciousness, that Augusta Delamore has been guilty of an action which she blushes to confess to the menials of her father—I am disgraced—lost!—my proud father glorying in *my* spotless, blameless, lofty honour, more than in all the splendour he so highly values!—Oh, Louisa! I, who so lately thought myself dishonoured by the idea that I could become the wife of George Villars, for whom I have now stolen, like a criminal, from the castle of my forefathers, to enjoy clandestinely the homage which I persuaded even myself to believe that I despised!" The vehement agitation of her feelings, together with the chill of the violent shower which had overtaken her while distant from the house, had raised a high degree of fever.

This was not a moment for argument or advice; Louisa tenderly soothed her feelings, and at length, by affectionate persuasions, prevailed on her to allow her to mention her illness to Mrs. Mandeville, whose medical skill she felt desirous to call in, as well as to take advantage of this moment of suffering to strengthen her filial affection.

In crossing the hall for this purpose, her passage was abruptly stopped by George Villars, who, braving every risk, had placed himself there, to hear of the safety of Augusta. Circumstances were greatly changed since that name had last been mentioned between them.

Louisa now felt that the encouragement of this attachment, already so fully returned, was the best means of reconciling lady Augusta to the change in her situation, which must shortly be known to her, and she minutely answered all his inquiries, promising fresh information early the following morning. The consciousness of the power he now possessed over the happiness of Mrs. Mandeville, through her daughter, gave an unusual degree of affection to her manner towards him, and gave added force to the earnestness of her entreaties, that he would for the present withdraw.

A perplexity she had not at first considered, checked her steps as she approached the saloon: her apprehensions for Augusta's health made her eager to call in the aid of Mrs. Mandeville, and she only now recollected that it was impossible to inform her of her illness, without also informing lord and lady Castlebrook, who were in the same room. She knew that lord Castlebrook's sense of female decorum would instantly take the alarm, and that his first inquiries would be on the cause of her being out after sunset alone, and far from the castle; and the idea of accounting for it falsely never occurred to her. The perplexity however had been provided for by Morton, who met her with information, that, aware it must sooner or later come to the knowledge of her lord, she had told him that her young lady had been caught in a snow-shower in returning from the cottage of a poor tenant, where she had forborne to ask the company of Miss Mandeville, the children being ill of the measles; her lord, she said, seemed displeased enough at this, though he did not like to blame lady Augusta before a servant.—"And so you may consider, Miss Mandeville," she added, "what a way he would be in if he knew the truth."

Louisa blushed, and felt very guilty in seconding a falsehood; but she instantly determined she was right to do so, and not expose Augusta, in her present state of nerves, to the rage of her supposed father, and consequent declaration of her real birth.

She found him walking thro' the apartment with a clouded brow, muttering, at intervals—"Very extraordinary!—five o'clock!—a December evening! Augusta was always charitable, but this is a little too condescending—Augusta, who always felt, with such strict decorum, what she owed her sex, her character, and station!" but when Louisa appeared, anxiety for her health overcame every sentiment of anger, and he advanced to hear her account.

Fearful of really alarming him, she forbore to mention her own apprehensions; without corroborating, she avoided contradicting Morton's tale; and as soon as she could escape from his minute inquiries, she retired with Mrs. Mandeville and lady Castlebrook to the chamber of Augusta; lord Castlebrook, in the mean time, dispatching a servant for the nearest medical assistance.

Before morning, the fever had risen to delirium, and apprehensions were entertained for her safety. For three days, with ceaseless care, Louisa, Mrs. Mandeville, and lady Castlebrook, watched her feverish pillow; and still, whenever in intervals of reason she found herself alone with Louisa, she implored her to soothe the anxiety she knew that Villars endured.

On the fourth day there was a visible amendment, but the fever had left her alarmingly weak, and still unable to rise from her bed.

Louisa had now the difficult task of calming the spirits of lord Castlebrook, which had suffered much from the danger of his beloved Augusta, and still more by the mystery which had caused it. So carefully had she concealed her sentiments from every eye, that while he frequently expressed to his attentive young friend his suspicions that Morton's account of her walk that evening had been false, he never once touched on its real cause. But, in the mean time, the letter so hastily dispatched to lord Ennerdale remained uncontradicted, and it is not unnatural, that in the agitation he had lately undergone, it had been forgotten that the sweet soother of that agitation still continued, in the eyes of his noble relative, an exile from the castle, of which she was, in fact, the only comforter. He knew her more than restored to her former place, and forgot that it was not equally known to lord Ennerdale.

The letter however had reached him; the wily enchantress was there acknowledged to be worthy and respectable; and lord Ennerdale yielded to the importunities of his son, to travel to Castlebrook (where he had a constant invitation, though for eight years his ill-health and various occupations had prevented his accepting it), and there judge himself of Miss Mandeville. Well knowing the haughty disposition of lord Castlebrook, and not aware of the peculiar power Louisa possessed over his feelings, he had no expectation of there being able to become acquainted with her, but he hoped to learn more of her character than he could do by letter.

In order to leave an introduction to chance, and the tender care of lady Augusta and her mother, Harcourt forbore to accompany him, and the letter announcing his lordship's intended visit had been mislaid, in the confusion that pervaded the castle during Augusta's dangerous illness. A three days' journey brought him to the magnificent abode of Castlebrook; and alighting there, a servant shewed him into the library, while he went to inform his lady, his lord being out, of lord Ennerdale's arrival.

A young lady stood at a distance looking at a book she had just taken down, and was not, for a moment, aware of his entrance; she then advanced, with timid, though courteous politeness, but perceiving him chilled by the intense cold of the weather, the reserve of her manner gave place to the frankness of good-natured solicitude.

Louisa's manner to strangers possessed nothing of magic fascination; a pretty, pleasing girl was the highest praise usually allotted her on her first address; but where the situation of a stranger was in any respect distressing, the natural and universal kindliness of her heart gave her something of the charm she possessed in the eyes of those she loved; the unaffected cordiality of her words—the simplicity with which they were uttered—the open, candid truth and goodness of her countenance, peculiarly delighted lord Ennerdale, who, mistaking her for the brilliant and admired heiress of Castlebrook, felt something of bewitching sweetness in the almost childlike innocence of her appearance. When she had provided for his accommodation, and placed him near the stove, she proposed going herself to call lady Castlebrook—"But first," she said, blushing, "I must inquire who I am to announce."

"I should sooner," he replied, "have

introduced lord Ennerdale to his lovely cousin."

Louisa started; the cheerful frankness of her countenance disappeared, and with burning blushes she withdrew the hand he had taken.—" I shall inform her, my lord," she faintly answered, leaving the room.

" Wily indeed," thought lord Ennerdale, " must be this artful beauty, who has persuaded Harcourt to believe this sweet enchantress a haughty woman of the world! This seems to be just the character his better reason would have chosen—so simple—so unsophisticated, yet such an appearance of sense and discernment—a smile of such playful, childlike innocence—a brow of such deep and solid thought—just the kind, cordial sweetness of his mother's look and manner! Oh, Harcourt! born of such a mother, how could the mere glare of beauty or of flattery have higher charms for you, than such a mind as speaks in every look and tone of your lovely cousin? and she might have been his! that I read in the indignant blush which rose on my name." Such were his reflections when lady Castlebrook entered, and with the usual openness of his temper, they were instantly communicated to her.

Lady Castlebrook was aware that it was Louisa, not Augusta, who had excited his admiration, and with maternal pride she heard his praises of her daughter without informing him of his mistake.

" My dear lady Castlebrook," said the good old man, tears rising to his eyes, " painful indeed must be my feelings, to see my boy, whose clear, unbiassed reason I felt even more noble than all his military glory, thus charmed from every sense of what is good and lovely by the arts of syren beauty; and I must feel for myself too. What a blessing to my old age would have been a child so gentle, kind, affectionate, as that lovely girl! And now I must see him, wretched as he is, all his cheerful spirits gone, or receive to my house one who would despise the place I should wish to offer Harcourt's wife—my heart! But you have seen her, lady Castlebrook—what is her appearance—what is her disposition?"

"Her disposition," answered lady Castlebrook, smiling, "is all her appearance indicates, and you can judge of her appearance—Louisa is the person you have seen. Augusta is confined to her bed."

"I should have known it!" he exclaimed—"I should have known Harcourt too well, ever to doubt the excellence of his judgment! This hour I will write to my noble boy; but first, madam, will you beg of her to see me, that I may ask her pardon, and tell her, that want of fortune is no obstacle with her? Yet," he added, "I should have been happier if she had been a daughter of Castlebrook: however, tho' she is not, she is a lovely creature."

Lady Castlebrook paused doubtfully—should she at once inform him that Louisa and the heiress of Castlebrook were one, or persevere in her original plan of waiting till the feelings of her lord were more conciliated? However, a moment's reflection decided her on the latter.—"I think," she said, "you will find Louisa, in every respect, better suited to your noble Harcourt. If Augusta had accepted him," she added, recollecting that her words were calculated to give an injurious opinion of her, "it would have been rather in compliance with the wishes of her family, than from any decided preference—but I shall seek Louisa," and she left the room.

She found her in Augusta's room with Mrs. Mandeville, to whose tenderness she had instantly flown on escaping from lord Ennerdale. Pale and agitated, she rested in her arms, hiding her face on the bosom which had cradled her infancy.

Mrs. Mandeville gazed on her in silence; the most affectionate anxiety was expressed in the countenance of Augusta, who, raising herself as lady Castlebrook entered, earnestly inquired what lord Ennerdale had said.

"He is delighted with Louisa," answered lady Castlebrook, kissing Augusta with a degree of fondness she had never felt for her before; and then advancing, she drew Louisa from Mrs. Mandeville's arms to her own, while she told her that he desired to see her, "and honours the choice of his son," she added; "portionless as you are, my child, he now accepts you with delight."

"Is there not a joy in poverty?" said Louisa, kissing off the tear which stole down her mother's blushing cheek.

Again she turned to Mrs. Mandeville, as if seeking courage for the interview.—"Dearest Louisa!" she exclaimed, "be but yourself, and I will ask no more."

Louisa was herself, but her timid, reserved self; for notwithstanding her own desire, and the tender endeavours of her two mothers, she could not attain her usual cheerful gaiety; however, this was perhaps for the best, as any failure of manner served the more effectually to counteract lord Ennerdale's opinion of Harcourt's enchantress; the very points in which she failed, of address and *agaçerie*, as those in which, even now, she excelled, of natural politeness and unaiming quiet-ness of manner, served to convince him that art had never aided her attractions. It was evident that an assumed look or tone was impossible to her, even where occasion might call for it; but that the constant wakefulness of her mind, and refined goodness of her heart, would rarely leave to dissimulation any thing that Politeness, that charming handmaid of Good-nature, should require of her. She endeavoured to conceal that her heart still fluttered with some remains of terror of him as a judge; but her hand, placed in Mrs. Mandeville's, with a look which seemed to solicit protection, betrayed the emotion.

Lord Ennerdale's kind heart pitied and loved it; and affectionately embracing her, he said he would not agitate her with interesting conversation until they were better acquainted.—" I will only say," he added, " that I am now as much pleased with Harcourt as I was displeased with him when I entered this house; it was the first, and I hope the last time of his incurring his father's disapprobation."

Louisa raised her head with a grateful smile, and burst into tears. Gradually drawn from her first embarrassment, Louisa became, before the end of the evening, at least an intelligent listener; but the duties of the tea-table, which occupying her hands and eyes (her greatest difficulties through the day), had, in part, relieved the extreme awkwardness of her feelings, called also for her usual attendance on Augusta.

"Where are you going, my little Lousa?" asked lord Castlebrook, when she arose, just as the eyes of Harcourt's father were fixed on her with animated pleasure.

She smilingly pointed to the cup she held, and left the room.

"There is a trait," said lord Castlebrook, "which may indeed delight the parents who have a claim to that child." The expression, though intended to signify Mrs. Mandeville and lord Ennerdale, coming from his lips, went forcibly to the heart of his wife: he continued—"I saw her smiling eyes, bright with the consciousness that she pleased lord Ennerdale, yet she left him to attend the sickbed of her friend. And let her, my lord," he added, in a lower voice to lord Ennerdale, "such as you see her, plead my excuse for having, the very next day, broken the resolution expressed in my letter. We could not live without her, and she and Mrs. Mandeville had too much real dignity of mind, to mark, by their refusal of our invitation, resentment at a step which the feelings of a parent prompted."

Never had the mothers passed an evening of more tranquil and unmingled felicity than this; they saw Louisa approved by the father of Harcourt, and in his pleasure in that approbation, and anxiety to promote it, they read the growing tenderness of lord Castlebrook. Augusta, too, though weak, had made a visible amendment, so that nothing was wanting to their happiness; however, its calm tranquillity was not long to last.

The next morning being rainy, so that he had no hope of meeting Louisa in the grounds, too impetuous to repress his anxiety for lady Augusta, George Villars came to the house, and refusing to enter the sitting-room, sent up a message, that a person desired to see Miss Mandeville.

Lord Castlebrook happened at the moment to pass through the hall, and meeting him, offered his hand, and inquired why they had been so long without seeing him, inviting him into the library.

"My wish is to see Miss Mandeville, my lord," he coldly answered.

Lord Castlebrook looked surprised, but, with polished hospitality, repeated his invitation.

"No, my lord!" replied Villars; "while I can never be received in this house in the character in which now I stand here, I will not enter it in any other. My object is to see Miss Mandeville, not to force myself as a guest at Castlebrook."

"Mr. Villars, I do not understand you," said lord Castlebrook; "you have always met a cordial reception here, then why, in this clandestine manner, meet a young lady whom you might have seen in any of the apartments?"

"I believe," he replied, "Miss Mandeville needs no defence, and for myself, I desire to give none: her coming at this moment would relieve us both from much unpleasantness, since I cannot go until I have seen her."

"Forgive me, sir," said lord Castlebrook, "when I say, that any message you wish to deliver to Miss Mandeville might better have been given by letter to her mother, or through me."

"I did conceive, my lord," said Villars, haughtily, "that Louisa Mandeville might have seen the friend of her childhood—might have broken through the rigid strictness of proud decorum, to give a wounded heart all the balm it can receive, without suspicion; but since it is not so, my message can be delivered through you—the answer can only come from her."

"As the friend—the future relation of Miss Mandeville, I must beg to hear it."

"My message then," said George, "is

to inquire for lady Augusta Delamore; but here I must and will remain, until I hear from Louisa the exact progress of her recovery."

"I conçeive," said lord Castlebrook, affecting not to understand him, lest any expression of the anger which swelled his breast should seem to glance on his daughter, "that Mrs. Villars might, more properly, have expressed her regard for my family, by an inquiry through her footman, in the common course of etiquette."

"Etiquette, my lord!" repeated Villars, thrown off his guard by the calm contempt with which he seemed to repel the idea of even a possibility of his daring to feel any personal interest in her welfare; "mine were not the inquiries of etiquette, but of fond solicitude!"

"Fond!" exclaimed lord Castlebrook, starting back, while rage almost deprived him of recollection—"fond solicitude for lady Augusta Delamore!" then, with an effort to suppress his indignation for the sake of his daughter, he added, more calmly—"give me leave to tell you, sir, that your *solicitude*, as you are pleased to term it, might have been expressed with more reserve; however, it is now satisfied—lady Augusta Delamore is better; and now, sir, I conceive your business to be concluded," and he pointed to the door.

George's pride for the moment overcame even the care for lady Augusta, which should have led him instantly to withdraw, and he sternly answered—"My lord, I have already said, that I must and will remain till I see Miss Mandeville!"

This was a fair opportunity for the rage suppressed, lest it should be supposed that any doubt of Augusta mingled in it, to burst forth, and vehemently stamping his foot, he repeated—"And I say, sir, that I desire you instantly to quit my house."

"I will not go, my lord!" said George. "If I tamely submitted to insult, even from her father, I should be unworthy lady Augusta."

Lord Castlebrook stood thunderstruck, as if rage and astonishment had deprived him of motion and utterance. At length, collecting himself, he advanced towards him, and in the low tremulous tone of rage *concentré*, he said—"Did I not believe, sir, that your insolent presumption is unfounded as it is daring, I should——"

Louisa, who, as she descended the staircase, had heard the latter words, sprung between them, and clinging to lord Castlebrook, drew him back.

"Do not interfere, Miss Mandeville; go into the drawing-room," he said, violently advancing.

"Dear George," she exclaimed, "what infatuation possesses you? She is better—go."

"I yield to you, Louisa," he answered, and obeyed her.

Lord Castlebrook moved towards his study, looking to Louisa to follow him for several minutes. He paced the room in silence; then locking the door, he returned to Louisa, and with quivering lips he asked—"Did you hear that expression? I can scarcely banish the terrific idea that it had some meaning—'If he submits to insult, he is unworthy lady Augusta!' Daring impertinent! it is false—it is impossible!"

To hear her earliest and dearest friend thus spoken of, was truly painful to Louisa; but she was silent.

"My dearest girl," he continued, "to doubt you, is as impossible as to doubt Augusta; yet I would ask, what was this person's business with you?"

"To inquire for lady Augusta," answered Louisa.

"And—and——" lord Castlebrook began; but unable to utter the question, he walked through the room again in silence. Again he approached her, and looking stedfastly on her agitated face, he said—"Louisa, you know something of this—tell me all without reserve: that evening walk—what was its motive?"

At first anxiety and sorrow for George, fear of the premature disclosure to which the discovery of lady Augusta's attachment must lead, and which might for ever deprive her of a father's affection—apprehension for her mother, now the dreadful moment was come, and for Mrs. Mandeville, through the effect it might have on Augusta's character, had divided the heart of Louisa; but now, as she raised her eyes to the quivering form, and pale, agitated features of her father, filial affection took possession of every feeling—she threw herself into his arms.

"I see," he said, "that I must hear the worst; but I can bear it now as well as at any other time; my sweet child, tell me now," and he laid his hand on his breast, "is my family disgraced?"

"No," faintly answered Louisa.

"Then that person's insinuations were false?"

"George Villars never spoke other than the truth," said Louisa.

"The truth!" he repeated, "and is not the truth of those insinuations indelible disgrace—worse than disgrace, for Augusta has deceived me? Speak freely, my love; your precautions are vain, if such a truth must come."

"There is much to tell," said Louisa, unwilling to take advantage of the moment when he was irritated against Augusta; "but I cannot tell it."

"Then who?" he asked. "Louisa, is it possible that you too have deceived me? that, to free her from Harcourt, you have——"

"Oh, my father," cried Louisa, "what a doubt!"

"True, my dear," he replied; "I should never doubt you; but a father's feelings—"

"A father's feelings!" repeated Louisa; but she said no more.

"You say," he resumed, "that my family is not disgraced; yet that Augusta—that this person dares to think Augusta loves him."

"Your family is not disgraced, and I trust it never shall be," said Louisa, in a firm voice, but with a fainting heart.

"Who can explain this mystery? That

old woman Morton;" and he impatiently approached the bell.

"Mamma," said Louisa; but the tremor she felt in uttering it rendered the word inaudible. Again she repeated it in a steadier tone.

"Then may I now ask it of her?" he said.

Louisa could not utter the affirmative, which was to decide her fate as a daughter.

"Only tell me," said lord Castlebrook, the gloom of his countenance, in some degree, lightening in the idea, "is there any mystery in the birth of Villars? Is it possible that he can be born of a race worthy to aspire to a Delamore?"

"No—not his birth," was all the answer the trembling Louisa could give.

"My dear child," he said, "I am not able to seek your mother; beg of her to come here to me; my present sufferings will excuse such a request."

Louisa felt unwilling to relinquish the

hand which, with a sinking heart, she thought perhaps for the last time held hers with paternal fondness—" Promise," she said, as he led her towards the door, " that nothing you may hear shall deprive me of your affection."

" What can I hear that could?" exclaimed lord Castlebrook; and when he saw the trembling agitation of her appearance when she left him, he felt that even if it should prove that she had had a share in encouraging the presumptuous Villars, he could not cease to love her, *next to his own child.*

As Louisa ascended the staircase, sometimes she flew with unusual velocity—sometimes paused to consider the dreadful importance of the errand. The door of lady Augusta's room lay open; Louisa stood near it for a moment before she could call " mamma." Her look, her voice, struck Mrs. Mandeville with the idea that her father had been informed of the truth, and had refused to acknowledge her—

" Go to him, mamma," she said, throwing herself into the arms of Mrs. Mandeville, " and tell him all. Will he reject me?"

" No," she replied; " lady Castlebrook's story and mine, your family-likeness, render a doubt impossible; my child, you will be acknowledged the heiress of Castlebrook." Mrs. Mandeville's breast heaved with strong emotion, and her eye rested on Louisa with fixed and mournful tenderness, as she thought that in a few minutes she would be openly the daughter of another.

" But still I am yours, mamma!" exclaimed Louisa, clinging to her; " oh! assure me that I am, or vain for me will be all he can say! Do not say, mamma, that that dear name must come no more from me to you—do not make me wish to be considered by my father an impostor."

While she remained alone, sorrow, in being in some degree parted from the authority of Mrs. Mandeville, though it were only as she must have been on her marriage—fear of lord Castlebrook's indignation against her mother—anxiety and sympathy for the feelings of Augusta, on finding herself hurled from the splendour in which she gloried, with natural pleasure in the approaching meeting with lord Harcourt, alternately, or rather at once, possessed her heart. At the sound of lord Castlebrook's footstep, she sprung towards the door; but before she had reached it, sunk into a seat; all hope had now vanished, and she heard, in imagination, the reproaches with which he would load her, as an impostor who had beguiled the affections of his wife from his own child.

He entered, and clasping her in his arms, he wept over her in silence for several minutes. At length he exclaimed—"Would both were my children!"

Louisa too was long before she could utter the words which swelled her heart—"My mother——"

"Is forgiven, Louisa," he replied.

"And does she yet know it?"

"Not yet, my love," he said; "it is a painful subject. You are all I could wish, my child—you are indeed a Delamore; but, oh! my Augusta is *very* dear to me. Would both were my children!" he again repeated, fearful of wounding the feelings of his new-found daughter, and the kind precaution was not cast away on her.

"She is not lost to you, my father," said Louisa; "both may be your children, since the dear name is permitted to me."

"My youngest child!" he exclaimed, embracing her with renewed emotion, "and, alas! my most grateful, my best! Oh, Louisa! has she not deceived me? That young man—that evening walk! oh, she has ill requited all my fond paternal tenderness."

Louisa, secretly aware of the ruling pride of her father's nature, which, feeling it reprehensible, she would not openly acknowledge to herself, now reminded him that Augusta might now be considered only in the endearing light of a daughter, without the less pleasing sensations which, under her present feelings and conduct, might attach to her as the heiress of Castlebrook.

"That is indeed a daughter's office, my child, my own Louisa," exclaimed her father, bursting into tears. "Enable me again to esteem my Augusta—that is true consolation. But, oh, Louisa, she did not know the circumstances which now excuse her! Equally she deceived me—there is the sting! I am proud, but my Augusta is more than my heiress."

Louisa's arguments were usually clear and unbiassed as her unsophisticated mind; but now, when it was impossible to prove Augusta in the right, she soothed him by indirect hopes of the advantages to be derived from her attachment, without entering openly on the subject. A scene, at once painful and delightful, awaited her in the meeting and reconciliation of her parents, after the exposure of her mother's duplicity, and in first embracing that beloved mother avowedly as her child.

A glance of lord Castlebrook's countenance reminded her of what his feelings must be respecting his so-long and dearly-loved Augusta; and conscious, from the feelings of Mrs. Mandeville on a similar occasion, how painful to him it must be to see her place instantly filled by another, she gently drew herself from the rapturous embrace of her mother, and glided out of the room, to seek Mrs. Mandeville, and then return to Augusta, who she knew expected her.

Except each morning a short and agitated inquiry, had Villars yet been there: Augusta sedulously avoided his name; but now some confused report of the meeting between him and her father having reached her ear, she sat raised in the bed, trembling expectation agitating every feature.—" The truth, Louisa?" she vehemently exclaimed. " I know that lord Castlebrook has seen him—insulted him."

Louisa attempted an assurance to the contrary.

" No, my dear Louisa," she repeated, " it is in vain you attempt to deceive by words, while your countenance expresses every real feeling. At once then speak. Am I an outcast from my father's house—

worse, from his affection? and more than all——Oh, Louisa! it is much more—was George insulted?"

The trembling Louisa could not command the power of utterance.

Augusta sprung from her bed, and ere Louisa had time to perceive her purpose, she had reached the door; there, however, she was stopped by Mrs. Mandeville, and, overpowered by the effort, sunk into her arms; but with returning vigour she attempted to rush from them, in pursuit of her father, whose violence, together with George's haughty sternness of temper, she dreaded would lead to bloodshed.

Mrs. Mandeville and Louisa, by assurances that his anger was already appeased, tranquillized her sufficiently to enable them to place her on the bed; but there, fervently grasping a hand of each, while every quivering fibre expressed her mental conflict, she solemnly adjured them, candidly, and without reserve, to repeat every word spoken either by her father or Villars, whose vehemence she dreaded as much as the proud resentment of lord Castlebrook.

Mrs. Mandeville faithfully complied with her request; she laid herself back on the pillow, pale as marble, and pressing her trembling hand on her brow, so as to shade her face, she listened in silence, and without movement, except now and then a start of nervous tremor.—" Mrs. Mandeville," at length she said, " I do not ask advice—my purpose is fixed—do not torture me with remonstrance; but in you and in Louisa, rather than in my own parents, I wish to repose confidence, to seek tenderness, independent of advice. With filial duty I have loved my mother—with higher feelings, with far stronger affection, my dear and honoured father; but my heart knew not the softness, the minutiæ, if I may so term it, of deep and rooted attachment, until it fixed on—on——" Augusta felt a natural timidity in boldly asserting her love; but casting it aside as girlish frivolity, she added firmly, " until it fixed on George Villars. Shall I then, to gratify the *false* pride of my parents—to adhere, Louisa, to *mistaken* principles of duty—to follow the *narrow* prejudices of education, cast away the happiness, the only real happiness that can await me—the love—nay, that I cannot alienate—but the support, the counsel of Villars? Shall I destroy *his* every hope of felicity, and see him sink into the grave? No, never, I am determined. I know that my father's consent, or his forgiveness, can never be obtained, and——"

She had spoken slowly, and with apparent calmness; but here, when she was about to express her resolution to bring disgrace, as she conceived it, on her family, and to give up for ever the affection of her father, an involuntary shriek burst from her lips.

It was long before she could sufficiently recover from hysterical agitation to speak; at length she resumed—"In education, in intellect, in understanding, in information, he is my equal—nay, hear the proud Augusta Delamore confess it—my superior. Then where is the inferiority? In those trifles, Louisa, which perish with this 'wreath of clay,' and to procure these for others, or for myself, shall I give up the enjoyments of the heart—the mind? Oh, Mrs. Mandeville, his conversation has not been the vain flattery, the rhapsodic praises of a lover! he has expanded my views—he has led me forward, seeming himself to be led by me. He is the friend, the chosen companion of my heart."

Mrs. Mandeville, unable to suppress her strong emotion, arose, and looking significantly at Louisa, left the room.

Louisa more closely approached her friend, as if to speak, and seating herself on the bed, remained silent.

"You cannot disapprove of my sentiments, Louisa," said Augusta, fixing her eyes on her agitated countenance, as if she read there disapprobation, and wished to persuade herself to the contrary. "It was you first sought to instill them. George Villars might now lie in the grave;

Augusta might now be supposed to triumph in the power of her charms, while her heart really withered in splendid wretchedness, but for your words, your example. You cannot condemn your own work."

"If this is my work, I may glory in it," said Louisa; "and, my dearest Augusta, since I have gone so far, may I not hope that your opinions have altogether undergone a change—that you would not now (here Louisa trembled, but endeavoured to speak with cheerfulness) consider a more lowly station necessarily a less happy one?"

"No," she answered, "wildly confused indeed must be my views, if I could rejoice in being born of a family of whom I am the first—the only disgrace."

"Disgrace!" repeated Louisa. "My dear Augusta, can you in such a light consider your union with such a man as George Villars?"

"In myself I should feel honoured and

raised by it," she said; "but as the heiress of Castlebrook——Oh, Louisa, my feelings are strangely complicated!"

"You once remarked," said Louisa, "that, as sisters, you and I should be admirably calculated for the happiness of our parents. Let us wander a little into fairy land, and suppose both the children of mamma. How happy all would be! The child who requires some adventitious circumstance to display the virtues which she flatters herself she possesses, is about to receive reflected honour; while she whose talents, whose beauty, whose dignity, and loftiness of character, need not such borrowed plumes, is about to unite herself to one who can fully appreciate her—to whom she can look up with the reverence of a wife, without losing, in the dazzle of splendour and high round of fashion, that lofty grandeur of nature which shines most brightly where its lustre is all its own."

"That indeed were fairy land," said Augusta, faintly smiling.

"Then you would not dislike me for a sister, or mamma for a mother?" said Louisa, affectionately.

"Oh, would to Heaven I had been born of her!" exclaimed Augusta. "Then might I have gloried in my choice; then might I have fixed all my pride on his talents—all my pleasure in his virtues; then might I have been really happy—then might I have been really worthy!"

"Well, shall Titania use her fairy wand? shall I wave this myrtle, and transform you into Augusta Villars, *alias* Mandeville, and myself into Louisa Harcourt?" asked Louisa, with an effort at playfulness, to avoid forcing herself to an explanation, if she should find her unable to bear it; but there was something in her manner unlike its usual spontaneous gaiety.

Augusta fixed on her her eagle eye, with a look of doubt and uncertainty as to her meaning; and the quick glance of Louisa towards her face confirmed her in the idea that she meant something, though what she could not imagine.—"My dear Louisa," she said, "you have some meaning. What can it be?"

"What I trust you would wish," answered Louisa, dropping her face on the pillow.

"Nay," said Augusta, "you cannot act the deceiver. You have prepared me for much—then freely speak."

"You are the child of mamma," said Louisa, tremulously.

Augusta leaned back on the pillows; a momentary movement convulsed her lip; she fixed her eye on Louisa, until turning deadly pale, she sunk fainting on her shoulder. When recovered, she said—"Speak of it, my dearest friend, no more; let me myself consider its happy effects. Louisa Delamore is an honour to her name—a blessing to her parents."

She spoke with evident effort; and a secret glance stolen to Louisa's face betrayed that she uttered the truth without certainty, merely from the proud wish of anticipating whatever she might hear.

Louisa's silence informed her that she was right, and closing her eyes, she lay in motionless meditation for several hours.

Lord Castlebrook, in the meantime, leaving a note expressive of undiminished affection, to be delivered in case the disclosure should be made during his absence, had left the castle for London.

At first the prejudice which Villars's presumptuous attachment had excited against him, made him doubt whether his ambition, rather than his heart, had been interested; but on Mrs. Mandeville's assurances, that from his character such a suspicion must be unjust, he determined on laying the statement before government, only representing the exchange as effected by a nurse, and obtaining for Villars some honourable post in the diplomatic line, which would at once serve to display his talents, and remove Augusta from England, until the first curiosity had subsided, and she should appear as the wife of an admired and useful statesman.

His stay was no longer than the business required. The high interest of his noble family, and that of Harcourt, now the popular favourite, as well as the object of ministerial favour, obtained it without difficulty; and on the fourth day they prepared again to return to Castlebrook.

The time of his absence had been chiefly passed by Augusta in silence; but when she spoke, it was with cheerful serenity, and always with marked affection towards Louisa. Villars had not yet been admitted to her presence; but on the day of lord Castlebrook's expected return, she smilingly said to Louisa—"Your fairy wand was at once to change—transform us both to our new plans of happiness; then let George Villars and lord Harcourt return together."

Her desire was literally complied with, as Mrs. Mandeville felt that the additional emotion, in meeting him and lord Castlebrook at once, would be less injurious than a redoubled stroke. When the carriage stopped at the door, she blushed, and asked, was it lord Castlebrook's?

Louisa replied in the affirmative, and fearful of wounding her feelings, by taking a daughter's place in flying to meet her father, she remained quietly by her couch, nor advanced one step towards the door, even while the well-known tread of Harcourt approached it.

George Villars, who had been detained by lady Castlebrook until the arrival of her lord, accompanied them.

Augusta gave her hand to each, without speaking, until, as lord Harcourt approached, she whispered—"I congratulate you."

At first lord Castlebrook forbore to agitate her by caresses; but at length, overcome by emotions of tenderness, he clasped her in his arms, and weeping over her, exclaimed—"My child! my child!"

The tears which then mingled with his, Mrs. Mandeville hailed as the happy omen of softer feelings; and the silent drops which stole down Louisa's cheek Harcourt regarded with fond delight; they flowed from the kindliest sympathies of nature, unmingled with one emotion to sully their holy purity.

Lord Castlebrook soon mentioned the object of his journey to London, and its success; and taking Villars's hand, in which he placed that of Augusta, he said —"I rejoice, that in promoting our domestic felicity, I have been of benefit to my country, by placing, in a more conspicuous and active line, the talents of one who will, I trust, be one of its brightest ornaments. Nor can I give my sovereign a higher pledge of the sincerity of the opinion I expressed to him of the man I wished to be his servant, than in trusting to him the happiness of my Augusta. To the man who is worthy of her," he added, with tears of fond paternal tenderness, "I would willingly submit the government of kingdoms. But the peerage must not lose so high an ornament as my Augusta. Villars will obtain for her, as the reward of personal merit, that rank which she has hitherto held only as derived from others."

"No," said Augusta, blushing highly, "mine was not the pride of title, which every upstart peer might share with me; I have gloried in the stainless honour of my ancestors, and their lofty name; and I fear my dear Louisa's cares will still be necessary to subdue my tenacious pride; it will be too ready to turn, with all its former strength, to the talents of my husband—the fame of my father. George will prepare new themes for it to rest on, though here must end for ever 'Family Pride."

SILENCE;

OR,

THE SISTERS.

VOL. III. H

SILENCE.

"THAT castle," said the respectable vicar of B——, in answer to the inquiries of a stranger, who had joined him in his evening walk, "that castle is now uninhabited; it is, alas! now the property of the countess of Dellaville."

"Is she unworthy," asked the stranger, "or why that sigh?"

"She is most worthy," replied the vicar, "and is deservedly beloved in this neighbourhood, as well as by all who know her. My sigh was given to the memory of her brother, who, possessing every virtue, every attraction of character, was once regarded as the heir of this castle."

"Did he then die young?" said the stranger.

"Alas! sir, his fate was an unhappy one! it has never been clearly ascertained whether he is living or dead; though of his death there was once a report, of the truth of which there has been no reason since to doubt. Severe affliction drove him from his friends; it is now twenty years since he left them, and——"

The stranger interrupted—"Did they regret him?"

"Yes, sir, bitterly, and long; even to this hour, his sister and lord Dellaville—"

Again the stranger interrupted, by asking—"Was the affliction alluded to that of guilt or misfortune?"

"Of misfortune certainly," said the vicar, emphatically.

The stranger advanced a few paces with rapidity, and the vicar, perceiving that his eye was caught by the parish-church, towards which they were approaching, asked, would he wish to go to the churchyard, which, being on an eminence, commanded a very beautiful prospect? The stranger acquiesced by a movement only of his head, and as they pursued their walk, preserved an unbroken silence.

" Yonder white marble pillar, rising among the trees," said the good vicar, who was interested by the visible dejection of the traveller, and wished by conversation to dispel it, " was erected by the parishioners of B——, in gratitude and affection to those who rest beneath it—the late rector of this parish, and his daughter, Selina Hamilton."

The stranger started, made a few hasty steps forward, and then returned to his companion.

They had now almost reached the spot. —" There," continued Mr. Seymour, " there, in that tomb, are united the most virtuous, the best of human beings. But stop," he added, in a low voice, drawing back the stranger, and pointing to a female figure, which knelt by the grave.

Her fair hands were clasped upon her breast in an attitude of prayer; her lips moved, and her eyes were uplifted with an expression of transport: traces of exquisite beauty yet remained, but the freshness of youth no longer dyed her cheek, or its smiles adorned her lip; her auburn hair alone seemed to have escaped the ravages of time and suffering, and the flowers tastefully mingled with it, forming a marked contrast with her solemn countenance and occupation, added to the general wildness of her air. At the sound of footsteps she arose, and pressing her lips to the marble, she was hastily quitting the churchyard, when the vicar gently pronounced the name, " Matilda."

Turning, she smiled on him with exquisite sweetness, and, with childlike fondness, kissing his hand, she said—" I was in heaven when you came—I was just listening to her songs of praise; but do not grieve that you interrupted me—I love to see you here. See, I have covered her grave with roses; I thought she and papa saw it and smiled on me; but you know I am sometimes fanciful—I am not with them, though I see them—but look, they are her own roses—the first I have had this year," she added, drawing Mr. Seymour forward as she spoke; "oh, what delight to think that they enjoy the same perfume as Matilda does! but he——" she paused, and all her smiles were gone—"oh, never, never!—perhaps——but I will not think of him so soon after having seen Selina. He was my brother; my brother Frederick perhaps is with his Selina, though I have not seen him, and she would have shewn him to me if he was there—it was her joy to make me happy. Oh! no, no!"

"Why were you flying at the sound of footsteps, my child?" said the rector, as if to change the course of her thoughts.

She was intently gazing on the half-concealed face of the stranger; but on the respected voice, she turned, and asked what he had said?—"I was going, because—because—I forget. What did you ask, sir?" and again her eyes fixed themselves on the stranger. "He is not in heaven," said she, in a low and hurried tone. "I am very fanciful and forgetful this evening, sir," she at length said to the vicar, laying her hand on her forehead. Then looking again at the stranger, she added, "I love that gentleman, he is so like——" She paused. "Selina, perhaps it is——I cannot speak to him now; but I must see him when I am quite well to-morrow, before I come here to Selina; for after I have been with her, I cannot think of other things." Then gently, but fervently, pressing the hands of Mr. Seymour, she smiled on the stranger, and was out of sight in a moment, followed by a female attendant, who waited at a little distance.

The stranger strained his eyes to mark the last traces of her figure, and when she was gone, he laid his hand on his breast, with a sigh almost amounting to a groan; then walking a few yards from Mr. Seymour, he endeavoured to calm his emotion. The vicar regarded him earnestly. His eyes were sunk, his hair almost white, his cheek deadly pale; but his wasted form preserved a majesty of air—his step, though feeble, a dignity—his eye, though sunk and tearful, a power of glancing the brightness and haughtiness of youth, which proved that not age, but sorrow, had

> "Furrowed his firm cheek,
> And turned his bright locks grey."

"Might I, sir," said the vicar, "request you to accept a bed at my house? The lonely traveller is ever sure to meet a hearty welcome from my wife, and there I can relate to you the story of this poor Matilda, who must be interesting to every feeling heart. It is nearly connected with that of the lost heir of Percy Abbey, and of the sister for whom you saw her lament."

"Do, do," exclaimed the stranger, in a suffocated voice.

"You will then permit me to present you to my wife?"

The stranger bowed assent, and was conducted to the residence of the vicar, where, after having prevailed on him to take some refreshment, Mr. Seymour thus began:—

"It is now about thirty-seven years since Matilda Hamilton smiled, a baby, in these arms. She is the daughter of the last rector of this parish by a second marriage; his first wife also left him one daughter, but a few months old at the period of her mother's death. From her first consciousness, Selina's affectionate heart attached itself to a young lady, distantly related to her father, and it was his child's fondness for Miss Mansell first led him to an intimate knowledge of her worth—a knowledge which soon inspired the attachment that ended only with his life. At three years old, Selina again possessed a mother, and in three years after, Matilda was born. As the little sisters grew up, their hearts were twined in each other, and they were almost equally dear to Mrs. Hamilton, for Selina's infant sweetness had won her affection, so as to balance the feelings peculiar to a mother.

"Never did a happier family bless Heaven for its happiness than that of Mr. Hamilton, until Selina had attained her fourteenth, and Matilda her eighth year; the health of the inestimable wife and mother then began to decline, and she was ordered to remove to the Continent. Sad was the day of their departure to themselves, and all surrounding them. Mr. Hamilton presaged the loss of the idolized partner of his life; with the elastic spirit of childhood, Selina hoped for her immediate recovery, yet never had she known an affliction like leaving England, for there remained all that she loved out of the domestic circle. She left my wife and me, to whom she was much attached—she left her only female companion, Anna Percy, the daughter of the gentleman who formerly occupied the castle you, sir, were observing this evening; and sadder than all, she left Anna's brother, about five years older than herself.

"From the time of the first Mrs. Hamilton's death, Frederick Percy had felt the tenderest pity and affection for her orphan; but as Selina began to grow up, he felt her deserving of more than mere tenderness. Young as she was, her virtues, her self-denial, her self-command, enforced esteem; while her winning sweetness gained universal affection; and young as Frederick was, he was capable of appreciating the mingled softness and dignity of her character. To no one did Selina love so much to relate little traits of Matilda's sweet disposition, and in his approbation she felt as much pleasure as in that of her parents. She alone too had the power of drawing him from the silence and reserve of his habits, partly caused by natural disposition, and partly by the too great harshness of his parents towards him.

"But, to continue, sad indeed was the hour of their parting; the group is still before me; I almost see the graceful form of Frederick, as he held Selina's hand in his—the silent woe of his manly face—Selina's pale cheek and quivering form—the tears of Anna, as she repeatedly embraced the sisters—little Matilda clinging to him, her little arms twined around his neck, her pretty cheek pressed closely to his. When the carriage came to the door, he seemed convulsed with agony, and forcibly detained Selina—'It is for mamma's health, dearest Frederick; our sorrow will grieve her, and I trust we shall soon return,' Selina said. He charged her to answer his letters; she promised to do so, and they separated. I saw that he felt Selina's manner cold, and her calmness unkind; but for worlds she would not, at that moment, have added, by her tears, one pang to her parents' hearts.

"Frederick's feelings, though under habitual restraint, were sensitive beyond what I have ever seen; he was far, very far, from a suspicious or jealous disposition, yet often he mistakenly fancied himself slighted by those he loved; he was bashful, diffident, yet haughty—diffidently apprehensive of repulse, and haughtily guarded against incurring it: with Selina alone he had ever been open, free, and candid; but from this character you cannot be surprised, sir, at his story. I may, in their course, explain to you circumstances, which, when they occurred, were to us inexplicable, but which I have since learned from letters, and from those who knew every feeling of the parties.

"Mrs. Hamilton did not survive the year; she expired in Selina's arms, confiding her little Matilda to her care, as to that of a second parent, for even at that early age, the superiority, the firmness, which ever marked her character, had been visible to the attentive eyes of friendship. Mrs. Hamilton left her ten thousand pounds, exactly half the fortune of her own daughter, and Selina's gratitude for this mark of maternal affection, added another link to bind her heart to her little sister; but her health seemed declining under the affliction she had sustained, and her father, struggling for her sake against the weight of sorrow which overwhelmed him, sought for her every scene of gaiety and amusement.

"At Florence, at Paris, and in London, Selina Hamilton's early charms were extolled and worshipped. Her father received several proposals of marriage for her, from men of rank, fortune, and worth, all of which she steadily, though mildly, refused.

> 'Firm to reject, yet fearful to offend,
> The lover she refused, she made a friend.'

Her only given reason was, that her wish was to devote herself to the education of her sister, and a single life, as she was sure she would never meet in marriage a mind precisely suited to her own. When questioned on the grounds of this idea, she would only answer, 'she had a presentiment—she was well convinced of it.' Her fond father never pressed her more, and calling her his 'sweet nun,' and his 'own companion for life,' the wish for her marriage seemed never to occur to him, nor did he seek to investigate her feelings, resting satisfied that her doting love of Matilda, and her devoted filial affection, alone had caused her determination.

" Mrs. Seymour and I alone conjectured what has since proved to be the truth. Her early knowledge of Frederick Percy had raised her ideas of the man she could love much—much higher than any other man could attain to; we might have believed it only a fancy-picture, but for the strong agitation she betrayed when Mrs. Seymour one day asked her, had she answered Frederick's letters, as she promised to do on leaving him?—'No,' she answered, trembling with emotion, 'he did not write.' Jane was greatly surprised. I had often asked him, had he heard from Selina, and he always seemed even more agitated than she was on my wife's inquiry, and immediately turned the subject, or flew from me. All was then mystery; but we have since discovered, from poor Mr. Percy himself, that, not aware of Mrs. Hamilton's will in favour of her stepdaughter, also hating early engagements, and desirous that his son, whom he rather admired than loved, should develop his natural talents by intercourse with other nations, before he was burdened with a wife and family, he had suppressed his first letter. It was after a long struggle within himself, between the fear of obtruding on Selina, and the earnest desire of seeking a correspondence with her, that Frederick ventured a second. This was also destroyed; neither ever reached Selina, who was grieved and offended by his silence, while he was distracted by her not noticing the letters which he thought she had received."

Here the narrative of Mr. Seymour was interrupted, by the groan of agony which seemed to burst from the inmost heart of his auditor. In a few minutes, by a forcible effort, he restrained his emotion, and resuming the position in which he had first placed himself, he leaned his forehead on his arms on the back of the chair, and requested the vicar to proceed, desiring that he might not again break in on the narrative, as he was subject to such attacks, and found them most easy to conquer when he was least noticed.

Mr. Seymour continued—" I forgot to mention, sir, that before the Hamiltons returned to B——, Frederick Percy had set out on the travels to which so much had been sacrificed by his father. Four years of absence had made a great change in the appearance of the sisters. Selina was, when she returned, all that her lovely childhood had promised, except that she no longer possessed the lively flow of animal spirits, which was once so heart-cheering; yet this did not lessen her loveliness—no, every thing served to increase it. But I must not make my story tedious; and, indeed, were I not to check myself, there is not a period of Selina's life on which I would not dwell; it is the greatest delight to us both, to retrace every hour we spent with her from her earliest infancy—indeed, such a character as hers, all who love to admire the brightest works of their Creator must delight to examine.

"I must pass on until her three-and-twentieth-year, and Matilda's seventeenth. It was then that the unhappy father was taught to consider the sorrow with which he had resigned his wife to the grave as pleasurable pain, compared to that he was now about to endure—it was then that affliction entered this family of concord, for the first time since pious resignation had soothed the husband and the daughters' hearts, on the loss of Mrs. Hamilton; for though her early attachment to Frederick had closed Selina's heart against another love, her affections were so warmly engaged—her feelings so deeply interested in her father and sister, that it had left no gloom or pangs of regret; her spirits were even and cheerful, never exhilarated by amusement, though often animated in the pursuit of objects that interested her heart; her lofty and beautifully-formed figure moved rather with the grace of softened dignity, than with the bounding step of youth; her large dark-blue eyes were rather mildly and benignly luminous, than sparkling with brilliancy; her smile expressed something celestial—it was indescribable; her features were cast in the mould of a Madona, and she always wore her dark hair dressed in that style; her dress was very plain, always white, and formed of some soft material; her voice was the sweetest harmony, usually rather plaintive; she was fair as marble, all the life of her complexion consisting in its pure transparency, with scarcely a tinge of colour, except in her lips; when any emotion raised it, however, it was the most glowing rose colour, and then she was, I thought, almost as beautiful as her sister; the usual character of her countenance was placidity, but brightly, sweetly have I seen her smile at the playful sallies of Matilda.

" Matilda's was the very perfection of beauty. You have seen her, sir. Conceive those still-exquisite features lit up with all of beauty that sensibility, intelligence, vivacity, and the richest colouring, could bestow; her figure too can give you some faint idea of what it was in the bloom of healthful, happy youth; she was indeed

> ' Fair as the forms that, wove in fancy's loom,
> Float in light vision round the poet's head.'

" In her beauty too there was expressed so much of mental loveliness, that no eye could dwell on her with less of tenderness than admiration: but description can give you no adequate idea of what Matilda was; herself, faded as she is both in mind and person, can best enable you to imagine what she must have been; even now, when lost to reason, every thought, every expression, has so much of prettiness as marks a mind of superior powers, and the endearing sweetness of her character still glows in all its native warmth, uninjured by the blighting afflictions which nipped the blossoms of her ripening understanding."

Here again the stranger was overpowered to a degree that interrupted the narrative for several minutes, before he was able to entreat its continuance. Mr. and Mrs. Seymour looked at each other, but did not speak.

"No parent could know Matilda, without wishing to have such a child; this, too strongly, Mr. and Mrs. Percy felt. From her return to B——, it had been their most earnest wish to see her the wife of their son; but though perfectly convinced that Frederick need only see to love her, they justly considered it imprudent to speak to her on the subject. Mr. Percy repeatedly desired his son's return, without mentioning the cause which made him so particularly anxious for it; but, apparently captivated by foreign courts, he still pleaded for a further leave of absence. Now, when Matilda had attained to seventeen, he commanded him, on pain of his lasting displeasure, to make no more delay. Selina was absent, on a visit to her aunt, at the time of his expected arrival.

" One lovely spring evening, Mr. Hamilton, Matilda, Anna Percy, a sweet, lovely girl, my wife and I, were walking together near the parsonage, when on that very height overhanging Percy Abbey, where you, sir, first joined me, Matilda observed at a little distance a horseman, whose air, she said, was unlike any of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Anna instantly exclaimed that it was her brother, and flying towards him, was in a few minutes clasped in his arms. The majesty of his perfect form—the tenderness of his caresses towards his sister—the noble, proud, yet mild and endearing expression of his fine features, struck us all with admiration as they approached. With affectionate and graceful, though embarrassed sweetness, he addressed Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Seymour, and me; he had not yet observed Matilda, who had retreated behind her father, but instantly Mr. Hamilton drew her forward, saying—'See, dear Frederick, this is your little friend and favourite, Matilda.'

"Percy gazed on her with strong emotion, which we then attributed to the surprise of her exquisite beauty—to him we thought as unexpected as it was brilliant. He kissed her offered hand warmly and affectionately; then placing it on one arm, he gave the other to his sister, and leaning between him and me, Matilda walked on. Percy was silent for some minutes. At length he asked her, did she in the least remember him?

'I believe I do,' Matilda answered,

frankly, 'now I see you; but never hearing you mentioned, I had almost forgotten my former affection for you.'

"Percy started and trembled, but instantly resuming the most perfect composure, he said—'I thought my father and mother might have spoken of me. Anna was too young to recollect me.' He then, in a very unsteady voice, added the inquiry—'Is Miss Hamilton at home?'

"Matilda told him where her sister was, and Mr. Hamilton advancing, said—'My Selina will surprise you, Frederick, as much as Matilda has done; she is a lovely, superior-looking creature as ever Nature formed, and so grown since you saw her; indeed, in my paternal pride, I wished you to see them together, but Selina was so anxious to be with her aunt, I could not disappoint her.'

"Again he started, and turned pale. I observed him with the utmost anxiety; but when we reached Percy Abbey, where he and Anna joined their parents in begging us to stay the evening, he seemed so perfectly fascinated by Matilda, hanging on every word and look, and appearing so entranced while she sung, that all the ideas which had arisen during our walk were put to flight. One song he asked for, I heard her say Anna sung much better than her; and the delighted smile with which she looked at him, when Anna had finished her exclamation, 'Is not that beautiful?' seemed to go to his heart. He took her hand, and—'Just what might be expected from——' burst from his lips. Dropping the concluding words, he turned from her, and sighed deeply; but in a moment he requested a duet from her and Anna.

"In the carriage, returning home, Matilda was enthusiastic in her praises of him.

"Next day he was early at the parsonage, and, by invitation, dined there with his family. When we entered the dining-parlour, where Selina's picture hung over the chimney-piece, Mr. Hamilton pointed it out to Percy—'That is my Selina's picture, Frederick; but it can give you no idea of what she is, even in beauty, now.'

"Percy just raised his eyes to it, and answered the proud father, by remarking, in a faint voice, that it was very beautifully executed.

'It is executed by Matilda,' Mrs. Percy said.

'Yes,' Matilda added, 'and it is so very, very inferior to her real face, that I would take it down, but that even it has likeness enough to be beautiful, and delightful to us when she is away.'

"He looked at her then with animated admiration and pleasure. Of the rest of the evening she wrote her sister an account, which we have. My love," continued Mr. Seymour, "find poor Matilda's letter."

Mrs. Seymour took from a table-drawer a pocketbook, wrought in coloured silk, from which she drew a letter, saying to the stranger—"This drawer, sir, is dedicated to my dear young friends. This letter-case was my sweet Selina's work."

The stranger seized it, and pressing it between his hands, without looking at it, he raised his eyes to heaven. Mr. Seymour then read the letter:—

'More than ever I now long for my beloved Selina's return, for Frederick Percy is arrived, and I am sure you would be delighted with him. He must be greatly improved since we knew him formerly, or you would have doted on him, which I know you did not, as you never mentioned him to me. He is the finest-looking man I ever saw; the haughty dignity of his appearance adds a peculiar charm to the singular sweetness of his manner and voice. He is so well informed, so delightfully instructive as a companion, yet so easily pleased with others. He is very grave, rather inclining to pensiveness; but I like him the better for it. You know I like gravity in man—and there is nothing sombre in his appearance; indeed every thing about him I think pleasing and interesting; and he likes me very much. He said last night that he thought my voice the finest he had ever heard, except one. I thought he meant yours, and asked, had you ever sung for him? but he said—“Long, long since,” in a manner which made me feel he was thinking of something else.

‘I told him it was you had taught me singing, painting—every thing. He answered—“Yes, I knew it,” in such an absent abstracted way as quite provoked me. The only thing I do not like in him is, that he seems utterly to forget his former intimacy with our family.

‘I reminded him of the day we left B., which I perfectly remember; but instead of answering, he turned away, and made some remark foreign to the subject. I laughed at him, and said I was sure he had been in love ever since, or he could not feel so little interest in early recollections; and I found I had hit on the truth, for he blushed like scarlet, and sighed from the bottom of his heart. He then held out his hand to me, and said, solemnly—" Matilda, that is a subject you must not touch on."

'I am glad I know his secret, as it will secure my heart, which otherwise I am sure would be in great danger. He is indeed much more pleasing than any one I ever met, except my own beloved sister; and his manner is so cordially and admiringly affectionate to me.

'I am interrupted by him and Anna, who have called for me to ride. Do, do come home, dearest Selina, to your own

'M. H.'

" Look, sir, at poor Matilda's beautiful writing," said Mr. Seymour, presenting the letter to the stranger, who, with shuddering emotion, placed his hand before his eyes, and pushing the letter from him, said—"Go on—go on, sir; do not attend to me—continue your narrative, without omitting the smallest, most minute circumstances; but do not notice me."

The rector produced another letter, from which he read as follows:—

'Yesterday I thought for a moment I was mistaken in my idea of his foreign attachment, and that you were really the object of his love, for I found him gazing at your picture so intently, that he did not hear me enter the room; but I was soon undeceived, for as soon as he saw me, he made some remark on the painting, which plainly shewed me it was only as a connoisseur he admired it. Indeed, on reflection, I felt the absurdity of my own idea, both from the early age at which you were separated, his wish to prolong his absence, and all that had passed since his return. I will confess the truth to you—you have been mother as well as sister to me, and I should be miserable in having a thought concealed from you—I love him more than I thought I did. When the idea of his loving you occurred to me, I felt myself tremble; were there a mutual attachment, I could, without a sigh, see you his wife, and rejoice in your happpiness, even though purchased by some diminution of my own; but if he were attached to you without return, or if he really loves a foreign lady, it would make me very unhappy. I confess to you also, that if his heart is disengaged, I am sure it will soon be mine—he is so partial to every thing I do, seems so gratified by my affection for Anna, and is so constantly here. How I wish that my darling Selina was with me, to tell me whether I deceive myself, or whether Frederick Percy really admires me, as I think he does!'

"The next letter to Selina," said the

rector, "is from my dear old friend, their father."

‘Why does my Selina delay so long to return to us? Her absence must always make us less happy; but now I am very anxious about our Matilda—I scarcely know how I ought to act; and I feel as if I should certainly do the best, if the sweet guardian angel of my household was with me. You know from her that F. P. is arrived. On first meeting Matida, he seemed struck and surprised by her beauty, so much so, that until we had walked nearly half-way home, he could not speak with tolerable composure, and even then, whenever he looked at her, he seemed agitated.

‘I need not go on with particulars—you will have all from herself, Anna, and me, when you come home. You have often said yourself, that her beauty was of the kind to excite love at first sight—all her soul speaks so in it; her manners too must strengthen the impression her beauty makes; all contributes to gain for her, on first acquaintance, the tender admiration which every hour after proves that she deserves. From this I think we need not fear that his is a mere romantic fancy, though he has yet known her but ten days. She says herself, that he loves and admires her as my child, Anna's friend, and one he was fond of in infancy, but that he has never said any thing implying a stronger attachment. Frederick was always silent and reserved, so that his not having yet expressed his feelings does not alarm me, though I certainly do not wish him much longer to continue his devoted attentions without speaking openly. Ten days of *constant* intercourse is far from a short period.

' His parents and Anna say he is quite in love with her; that he frequently says she is one of the loveliest and most excellent of human beings, and that in beauty she is unrivalled; he never saw a countenance more beautifully speak the feelings, and never met feelings more calculated to give beauty its highest charm. I feel perfectly convinced that a few days more will see him her avowed lover; but I cannot bear that any man should become so without being known to, and approved by her sister-mother; besides, Seymour says he is less certain than I am, that Matilda must be loved and admired by all who know her, and that Frederick's admiration may go no farther than that of many others. His parents insist that he only delays a declaration until he has some confidence of Matilda's regard; but she is not a creature to be trifled with. In the meantime her affections may be irrevocably his. I see that he has made an impression on her innocent heart, much deeper than she is at all sensible of.

'To you, my sweet Selina, she was consigned by her blessed mother—then why are you absent at this very important period? To your care I also have principally committed our mutual treasure, and your early-ripened understanding, your perfection in every respect, make me look to you as an oracle. Come then, my love, immediately. All will go well, if it is under the guardianship of my sainted child. G. H.'

Mr. Seymour continued—" Frederick did greatly admire her—Matilda was indeed the most fascinating of human beings—the cordial warmth of her heart gave to her manner all the attraction of glowing animation; her sensibility and delicacy of feeling, that of the most sweet attention to the feelings of others. Always gay, her spirits were never too high, for her sunny smiles, her happy voice, her laugh of infantine gaiety, her playfulness, raised those of others to their own level. Her beauty was of that exquisite perfection, that it would have been affectation to say she was unconscious of it—and affectation was known to Matilda only by name—she was conscious of it, but she was so perfectly free from vanity, that she rarely thought of it, except when she smiled at the pleasure it gave her father and sister: of her accomplishments she was conscious, with the same freedom from vanity; she would play and sing for strangers, gratified by the applause she received, because it proved that they were pleased; but if there was another in company, whom her judgment told her possessed superior or equal powers, she would say so with the utmost simplicity, and then, when she was again pressed to sing, she would frankly comply, and hear her own praises echoed round the room, without one sentiment of elated vanity. Her innocent *unconscious consciousness* of attraction often reminded me of Milton's Eve; but the mirror in which she saw her charms reflected, was the fond admiration of her father and sister.

"A little instance of her sweet unenvying disposition now occurs to me. Anna Percy excelled in painting flowers, in which, not being her favourite style, Matilda was not equally skilful; but Mr. Percy, always partial to 'the little enchantress,' as he called her, above his own girl, persisted that in this, as in figures and landscapes, Matilda's touch was much preferable to hers. One day Matilda playfully called on him to admire her paintings, of which she produced a number. Mr. Percy singled out a rose, and turning to his daughter, said—'There, Anna, can you produce a flower to equal that?' With exulting pleasure she then told him that this was one of Anna's, which she had placed among her own, on purpose to call forth his real opinion, unbiassed by parental anxiety. She would often laughingly speak of the admiration she excited, and say she could not help thinking her admirers gave a proof of bad taste, in preferring her face to Selina's, for she thought Selina's features, and look altogether, a thousand times prettier than her own—'For,' she said once, 'though I am such a laughter-lover, I have a very sentimental taste.' Oh, she was lovely! I make digressions, sir; but I cannot help it when I speak of her."

"No, no," interrupted the stranger; "but speak of—of—her sister."

"Of Selina I cannot speak," said Mr. Seymour; "we can remind each other of every hour spent in her dear society, but I cannot dwell on little incidents of her, as of Matilda. Matilda was the loveliest of our own species, but Selina was above it—Selina always seemed, as her dear father said, the guardian angel of her family; on the minds of those who knew her, every word she uttered is impressed; but I know not what my feeling is towards her. She was too sacred, too superior, for us to think of her with the familiar fondness we do of Matilda; yet she endeared herself—she entwined herself into the inmost recesses of every heart: she was perfection—if she had one fault, there was but one."

The stranger raised his head, and exclaimed—"Selina a fault!" then colouring deeply, he added—"You spoke of her as faultless."

"I did," said Mr. Seymour, "because her fault, that pride which the most refined and elevated of her sex usually confound with modesty, is generally regarded as a virtue. She perhaps carried that beautiful characteristic of woman, 'which would be wooed, and not unsought be won,' to a length which those who saw its fatal consequences cannot but lament. It was this which, by absenting her from home at so critical a juncture, was the originating cause of all the afflictions of her family; but it influenced her no farther than in laying the foundation of the event which served at once to call into action all the virtues of her noble, disinterested soul, and to bring down a weight of woe, which bowed her own fair head to an early grave, blighted the lovely blossom she so fondly cherished, consigned to misery and exile the man she loved, and broke the heart of the tenderest of parents. The sentiment or action which produced such effects must have been erroneous in some respect, though we cannot now precisely say in what. A timely word, a look, might have warded off this ruin."

The good man paused for a moment, in too great emotion to proceed, and then continued—"The day of Selina's return, my wife and I, with the Percy family, dined at the parsonage. She arrived later than was expected, and after Mrs. Seymour and I were there. Matilda, watching for her in the window, flew out to meet the carriage; but as Selina clasped her to her bosom, her countenance beamed nothing of the joy which dimpled Matilda's glowing cheek. She repeated and repeated her embrace, seeming to take her sister to her inmost heart; and her beautiful eyes raised to heaven, the solemnity of her countenance seemed to me afterwards, as if she had, in that moment, vowed to sacrifice her own every earthly hope to this precious child, so often consigned to her care and tenderness, both by her dead and living parent. At the time it only appeared like the natural emotion of a guardian friend, for the interesting situation in which her darling charge then stood.

"During this day, and for many more, no suspicion of the truth crossed my mind; on the contrary, the dejection of her looks, and the emotion she at times betrayed, led me rather to apprehend that she did not see Percy with the favourable eyes we did, and that she doubted the happiness of her sister's probable lot.

"When the Percys came to dinner, she had not yet returned from her own room, where she had gone with Matilda, at her father's desire, to change her travelling-habit for an evening-dress.

"Frederick was silent and thoughtful, sometimes rising in strong agitation, sometimes fixing his countenance with forced composure. This was visible to all, and by all attributed to his sense of the influence Selina would have over the sentiments of her sister, and only served farther to confirm the idea of his passion for her.

"When the sisters entered, the complexion of Selina, which had been before unusually pale, had risen to the most brilliant glow. Never before or since did I see her look so lovely as on that day, for a creature of this world, though I have, on some occasions, seen her look more heavenly, more above the world.

'Here she is,' exclaimed Matilda, smiling with exulting delight, as she led her in.

"Her father looked at Percy, the most animated pleasure speaking in his venerable countenance. Percy arose as she advanced, and when, with cold reserve, Selina extended her hand to him, he took it with yet more frigid, chill politeness.

'You are not glad to see her, Frederick,' said the fond father; 'you do not remember what friends you were in childhood.'

'I can scarcely hope,' replied Percy, coldly, 'that nine years of separation, new scenes, and new friends, should not have wholly erased me from Miss Hamilton's memory.'

"He then turned to Matilda, who had blushingly retreated, and taking her hand, he said—'Is sweet Matilda too completely occupied with her sister to wish to hear more of the peasantry of Russia, about which she was inquiring yesterday?'

"He led her to a sofa, while Selina suffered Anna to draw her into a window. I did not overhear their conversation, but I fancy Anna was telling her instances of her brother's attachment to Matilda.

"When dinner was announced, Frederick sprung forward, and begged to attend *Miss Hamilton* down. She coloured, then turned pale; but his eyes, cast on the ground, could not see the change; then giving him her hand, she said to me —'Mr. Seymour, do not let me lose my place beside you.'

"Frederick, flushed to crimson, coldly attended her to the parlour; then leading her to the chair next mine, he said—'Your sister is anxious to claim the other seat by you,' and placing Matilda there, he seated himself beside her.

"These traits will serve to shew how free from blame both families were in pursuing the projected union, which ended so fatally. I saw Selina's manner cold and distant to him—his equally so to her; and a few days after her return, I asked her, had she any reason to think him unworthy of Matilda? She exclaimed—'No, no, he alone deserves her.' And that evening I saw her endeavour to conquer the chill reserve of her manner, and to join him in general conversation. Her countenance, whose placid sweetness had been once so animated, was become lifeless, as to things of this world, only expressing, at times, as she looked upward, a kind of solemn devotion, which I now understand to have been silent prayers for strength to support her high resolve. Her manner towards her father was tenderly affectionate as ever; but she seemed no longer to be alive to the thousand endearing attentions which had once so sweetly adorned it. Towards Matilda alone she was as fondly caressing as ever. For several minutes together, I have seen her gaze on her, then gently clasp her hands together, and raising her eyes to heaven, kiss, or enter into conversation with Matilda. When alone with us, the chill of death seemed to hang on her; but in the presence of her father and sister, she so far succeeded in her struggles with herself, as to prevent their being alarmed.

" But Mrs. Seymour saw it. Fondly attached to both, I believe my wife, if possible, loved Selina even more than her sister. Her suspicions of her declining health once excited, she constantly observed her with apprehension.

" Such, sir, were her manners towards Percy, that, far from an idea of the truth entering our minds, I asked my wife, did she think it possible that she had formed an unhappy attachment during her visit to her aunt?

" Jane caught at the idea, and, as she

watched her for the two or three following days, every thing served to strengthen it."

"Yes," said Mrs. Seymour, "the mingled expression of her countenance, as she looked at Matilda, appeared to me a struggle in her own mind between pleasure in her sister's felicity, and painful recollection of her own less prosperous love; her agitation, her abstraction—all I attributed to the same source.

"The three families, about a fortnight after her return, were together at Mr. Hamilton's house. After dinner the young ladies proposed music, and Matilda playfully whispered Percy—'Now you shall hear Selina sing, and know that mine is not the finest voice you ever heard, except that of a foreign lady.'

"Frederick said—'It is not a foreign lady;' but before he spoke, Matilda was busied in arranging the music for her sister, and disputing with Anna what song Selina most excelled in.

"It was the first time Selina had sung since her return home; her voice was then tremulous and unlike itself, yet its magic sweetness, its exquisite pathos, sunk to the heart.

" Percy stood behind her; but my thoughts, and those of my husband, were fixed on an object very distant. We heard the plaintive tones of her voice, and were only confirmed in our false suspicions. I did remark, however, that when she had concluded, he was the only person who expressed no pleasure; and I felt angry and irritated for my dear Selina, when I saw him take Matilda's hand, and with strong emotion entreat of her to sing.

" Matilda coloured at this almost-insult to her idolized sister, and angrily said— ' If Mr. Percy can only admire the display of science and fine execution, Selina's pupil may please him better than Selina's self, languid as she is this evening.'

" Percy gazed on her with transport, and when he uttered no word of praise, and seemed as inattentive to her as he had been to her sister, I admired what I imagined the delicacy of his feelings towards Matilda, which induced him, I thought, to appear as if he was that evening not in a humour for music, instead of seeming not to admire the singing she so fondly delighted in. Selina's was the music of heaven; Matilda's the gayest, sweetest harmony of earth.

" The evening was peculiarly lovely, and all soon expressed a wish to walk. Selina, Anna, Frederick, and I, joined in one group; while Matilda went with her father, Mr. Percy, and my husband, to shew them a distant part of the grounds. After we had walked a few steps in silence, Anna turned to her brother, and said—' I own, Frederick, I wonder at your taste; you might prefer Matilda's singing to Selina's, but surely, except Matilda, no one ever equalled even what hers was to-day. It must be great partiality makes you think a foreigner exceeds her.'

' One far, far estranged from me, alone equals Matilda in any thing,' said Frederick, actually quivering from emotion; and after a long pause he added—' I trust

Miss Hamilton is aware that no human being—that no——Oh, Miss Hamilton! if you knew how much my happiness depends on you—if you would permit me—'

'It is a more important trust, sir, than I desire to be honoured with,' said Selina, coldly.

"Instantly the agitation of Percy's look and manner was exchanged for the most chill reserve. Still influenced by the idea of his attachment to Matilda, both Anna and I, as well as Selina herself, understood his words as an application for her influence with her sister, and her answer as a refusal of this; but Frederick intended otherwise, and applied her answer to his meaning. You wonder, sir, that an old woman like me should remember every word, and be able to repeat every exclamation so accurately; but, sir, they are graven on my heart, and thence flow to my lips.

"Frederick, after a moment's pause, in which he seemed to collect every agitated thought, and to shut his real feelings from every eye, made some common observation; Selina coldly answered him, and they carried on a conversation on general subjects for about a quarter of an hour, when Frederick requested her to apologise to her father and sister for his return home, as he had letters to write. Anna said she would join the other party, and Selina and I remained together. I told her, 'that from her repulsive manner to Frederick, I feared that she knew of some defect in his disposition or temper, which made her disapprove of him for Matilda, observing, that if it was so, she should lose no time in communicating it, as Matilda's attachment daily seemed to gain strength.'

'Matilda loves him—he deserves it; I know she loves him,' she replied, in a voice, whose thrilling solemnity still vibrates on my ear.

"Her manner again awakened my anxiety to discover whether there was any truth in my idea of her being unhappily attached—'Selina,' I said, 'I fear you also love, and less happily than your sister.'

"Never did I see her so agitated; starting from me, while every fibre trembled, she almost shrieked the inquiry—'Why?'

"Finding by my answer that my suspicions had not fallen on the right object, she became perfectly composed, but remained wrapt in thought—'Mrs. Seymour,' she then said, 'since you have observed me so far, I believe it would strengthen and support me to confide in you; but never can my heart know this relief, until you have bound yourself never to betray me. If I am dear to you—if you love my angel Matilda, and the memory of her blessed mother—if you esteem the excellence of Percy, you will never betray me. I may then confide in you—may I not?' she added, with one of her natural smiles of fascinating endearment. I promised solemnly, not even to my husband, to repeat one word she uttered.

"She then told me, that her heart had

been devoted to Frederick Percy from her first memory, but that she did not know how much dearer he was to her, than all the world beside, until the moment of separation; and she was almost angry with herself, that she felt this separation even more than the danger to her beloved mother's life which occasioned it. This sentiment, she said, might possibly have shielded her feelings from the observation of others. His promise of writing to her was the only recollection which could soothe her at parting.

" Week after week, when they were settled in France, her heart palpitated at every return of the messenger from the post-office, and often, she said, she was scarcely able to read my letters and Mr. Seymour's, from the agitation of finding that only we had written to her. Once she had given up all thought of hearing from him; her attention, which had been partly divided by him, was all turned to her parents and sister; and when Mrs. Hamilton died, all her care became to soothe

the affliction of her father, and prevent Matilda suffering by the loss. But in the different capitals which they visited before their return home, her thoughts were forced back to Frederick; every suitor who offered himself forced on her a comparison between his character, and that she so devotedly admired. Wounded delicacy, in having fancied herself beloved where she was not, prevented her confessing her sentiments even to her who knew every other movement of her heart—'But through all my conflicts,' she said, 'Matilda was my unconscious comforter; from the moment of her birth, I loved her with the fondest tenderness—even before it, I had looked forward to her existence with anticipated delight. She was consigned to me by her sainted mother in her last moments; duty and natural affection bound my kindliest feelings towards her, and at every hour of her life, I have felt that if no such ties existed, she would have been the chosen friend of my heart. I have almost vowed to devote myself to her; while she is happy, I shall be so; my own fate is as nothing in my eyes, when compared with hers. I shall see him as her husband —try to love him as such. No, never shall her heart be rent by the consciousness of the pangs which have torn mine, and I shall be supported through all. There is my hope—there is my trust, my stay, my confidence.'

" Her heaven-illumined countenance, her lofty form, as she raised her fair hand and pointed upwards, the white drapery which floated around her, the light which seemed diffused over her whole figure—all was to me almost supernatural; I gazed on her, almost expecting to see her raised to the skies. Crossing her snowy hands upon her breast, she remained for several minutes engaged in silent devotion; then turning to me, she said—' In myself I am very weak; my most earnest wish is, that he should no farther delay—her heart is his; yet this evening, when he was about to declare all that I desire, I could not hear it; when he speaks to my father, I shall rejoice; but I could not hear him plead with me for my influence with another. Oh, my Matilda! Heaven will bless you, and I live but in you."

Overcome by sad and tender recollections, Mrs. Seymour desired her husband to continue.

"When we joined that evening at tea, Selina's appearance, calm and self-collected, led me to no suspicion that my wife had even agitated her by making the intended inquiry; on the contrary, with apparent cheerfulness, she rejoiced us all; either she had derived consolation from having disclosed her sorrow to a sympathising friend, or she had received from Heaven farther strength to work her purpose. Her poor father fondly remarked her placid cheerfulness, saying, he had almost feared she was getting ill; and Matilda, though herself more out of spirits than I ever saw her, smiled with delight at the revival in her sister's look and manner.

"The next morning, when I was sitting with Mr. Hamilton in his study, Selina entered. Never, I think, was the expression of heaven so bright on any human face, as on hers at that moment—it was such as a painter might have chosen to personify Devotion. She slowly advanced, and placing her hand in Mr. Hamilton's, she said—' I consider Mr. Seymour as a second father both to Matilda and me—so I may freely speak before him.'

" She then related, that ' Matilda had the preceding evening confessed to her, with tears, that she loved Frederick Percy much—much more dearly than she had thought possible, for that she found herself almost as much attached to him, as to the sister who had been every thing to her from infancy, and that she only knew it from the agony she endured that evening, when the idea had occurred to her that he would have spoken ere this, had he loved her as she was taught to believe.'

' But, my love,' said Mr. Hamilton, ' did you not assure her that he only delays, until he feels more certainty of acceptance?'

'I did,' replied Selina; 'but I think you might, with perfect delicacy, communicate to Mrs. Percy that you have reason to believe his attachment returned.'

"As she spoke, the door opened, and Frederick Percy entered, with a countenance of the deepest dejection, and deadly pale; but the moment he saw Selina, he flushed highly. Seating himself near Mr. Hamilton, he said, in a low and tremulous voice—'I have, I fear, intruded; but this evening I leave B——. I am going for a short time to my friend lord Dellaville's, the companion of my travels, which perhaps we may resume together, without my returning here. May I not once more see Matilda?'

'You may, you may, indeed,' said Mr. Hamilton; 'but, dear Frederick, you need not go.'

"Selina arose, and in a firm voice she said—'I trust, Mr. Percy, nothing I said occasions your departure? I believe that all your hopes, all your wishes, may be gratified; far from objecting, there is no one,' (here her voice became less steady) 'there is no one I feel so worthy of the happiness you aspire to.'

'Miss Hamilton!' Percy exclaimed, reddening with indignation, 'do you mean to insult me?'

"Her father looked at him, while tears filled his venerable eyes—'No, son of my heart!' he said; 'Selina rejoices to say, that you have won the affection you sought —Matilda is yours.'

'Impossible!' cried Frederick.

'Not impossible,' said Mr. Hamilton, with a benevolent smile.

'Frederick,' said Selina, with a firmness to which, since I know all, I have looked back with wonder, 'you have imagined me averse to your hopes—therefore you may take my word, Matilda's heart is yours.'

"He repeated the name 'Matilda!' hurried to the window, pressed his hand on his eyes, and rushed from the house, overpowered, as we supposed, by an excess of joy, which some fancied coldness on her part had rendered unexpected. Selina looked after him, laid her hand on her breast, smiled, though with an expression of peculiar seriousness, and soon withdrew.

'What a creature is that,' exclaimed her fond father, 'so above this world, yet so tenderly, so deeply interested in the temporal happiness of another! I see,' he continued, 'that while she rejoices in the fair prospects of happiness opening to our precious darling, her heart bleeds at the resignation of her own rights in her.'

"I ascribed her emotions to the same cause, saying, that she had all a mother's feelings for Matilda, and hers was an early age to be called on to give up her child in marriage. Thus we went on, seeing things through the medium of a previous impression, and blind to the truth, until it burst on us in thunder.

"Frederick did not reappear until the next morning, and the evening passed, as Mr. Hamilton told me, in much unexpressed anxiety at his absence under the circumstances. On his arrival, however, it appeared that he had wished to make arrangements with his father, before he declared his sentiments to Mr. Hamilton.

"From this time, every thing went on smoothly in the usual course, except that Selina was evidently suffering under a preying fever, apparently occasioned by cold, and that her spirits were uneven; she would sometimes sit in company mute, motionless, and pale; sometimes she assumed a false cheerfulness, and sometimes a visible flutter pervaded her manner; any thing remarkable, however, in these respects, was only occasional; in general, her demeanour was placid and collected.

"Matilda, in all the bustle of nuptial preparation, and in the happy engagement of many hours daily with her lover, never for a moment forgot the indisposition of Selina; she watched over her with all the tender care of a nurse—with all the fondling endearment of a playful child. Poor, lovely, unconscious innocent!—glorious, high-minded Selina! what a fate was yours!

"The only thing which cast a shade over the felicity of Matilda, was the want of affection she frequently observed between her lover and sister, and often she would sportively place Selina's hand in his, and say—'Frederick, if you are my lover, you must be her brother, and I would really cast you off for your coldness to her, only that for once Selina is in fault herself.' Sometimes also I have heard her more seriously inquire from each, what was the cause of their dislike of the other? Selina always answered that she had given the best proof of her esteem for Percy, in entrusting to him the happiness of her Matilda, and he would, with an attempt to smile, assure his bride, that far from disliking, he felt the highest respect and admiration for her sister.

'Then why do you not love each other?' I remember my poor Matilda once said. 'But my heart, equally divided between you, shall form a strong link of friendship, and then I shall have nothing—nothing in the whole world to wish for.'

"I have before observed, that I suspected an unfortunate attachment to be the cause of Selina's depression. It was during this interval it first glanced into my mind, that Frederick was the object of it. Urged by almost paternal affection, I asked her, as my Jane had done, to inform me, as a friend, whether she had formed, during her visit to her aunt, an attachment for any individual disagreeable to her father? Blushing highly, and looking much agitated, she asked me, what in her manner could have given rise to such an idea? I answered, only her appearance of dejection.

'Be assured then,' she solemnly said, 'that with my aunt I never saw any one who could please me for more than the moment. You could not expect me to be in particularly-good spirits, when I am going to lose Matilda; but surely I am always composed—always cheerful: they did not remark my dejection?'

"This question she again repeated, and with an emotion which for a moment shocked me with the tremendous idea; but when I next saw her in his company, I closely observed her, and her placid countenance, her self-collected manner, completely deceived me. It was strange!

"So vehemently did Frederick hurry the preparations, that little more than a week elapsed between the day of his declaration and that of his marriage. On the eve of that most memorable day, he brought his bride, while Mrs. Seymour and I were alone with her, a magnificent veil of foreign lace, as a nuptial gift. Matilda displayed it to Mrs. Seymour, admiring its uncommon beauty, and looking up at Percy, she said, smiling—'You wish to please me—do you not?'

"'My whole life,' he energetically exclaimed, 'shall be devoted to your gratification.'

"She laughed, and answered—'Well, I do not want your life *now*, only your veil.'

"'The veil is yours, my Matilda.'

"'No,' she said, 'but yours, dear Frederick; and you will give it to Selina, enclosed in a letter.'

"He stammered some apology—if she would present it, for Miss Hamilton's dislike of him made him at a loss how to write. After a pause, Matilda said, 'she feared Selina did not love him as she would wish; but she would dictate a letter, in which he should enclose it, and give it after the ceremony.' I remember the very words he wrote by her direction; and, oh! I remember her, my lovely child—the playful smile of her lip—her pretty head, cast up in thought—her fair form, as she leaned over him. The words, I think, were these:—

'May I claim the right of a brother, to entreat Selina's acceptance of a gift, which, before I could plead that relationship, I would not venture to offer——' She paused here, and with an arch smile continued—'As more than a sister, however, I regard Selina, since to her instructions, her care and tenderness, I principally owe all the virtues I love in my Matilda, which will, I trust, make the future happiness of my life.'

"Matilda coloured at my smile, and blushingly she said—'I know Selina is only susceptible of flattery through me, and he would not love me so much, if he did not think me good—so it is scarcely vanity.'

"Oh, my dear, dear child!" exclaimed Mr. Seymour, bursting into tears, which, though he struggled with them, long disabled him from proceeding. His emotion seemed to throw the sympathising stranger into agony. He at length continued.

"Just as he was folding the letter, before he had directed it, Matilda's little bird, which she had freed from its cage to fly about the room, perched on his hand; he arose to place it on her hair, and thus omitted addressing the letter, which he put into his pocket. How trivial was this incident, yet what fatal circumstances resulted from it! I should mention, that my wife and I remained in the house during the wedding preparations.

"For the early part of this evening, Selina's manner was unlike what I had ever seen it; usually, like a being of a superior order, she remained calm and collected, while all around her were fluttered, and her heavenly mind was visible in the merest trifles, enabling her to pass unruffled, untouched, through the most teazing worldly cares, as it taught her to bear with resignation and fortitude the heaviest earthly sorrows. Now, on the contrary, she alone was fluttered; she entered into all the little minutiæ of preparation with trembling agitation; but soon recovering herself, she left the room. She had attempted too much.

"Her father remarked, that he feared she was ill and feverish, for never from infancy up, had he seen her discomposed. Mrs. Seymour, who, as I mentioned, was the confidante of her fatal secret, forbore to accompany her, aware of the holy purpose which caused her absence; but Matilda, who had always, like a child, followed Selina's steps, soon went to seek her.

Quickly returning, while tears glistened in her sparkling eyes, she informed us that Selina's door was bolted, but that from a few sounds which had escaped, she knew she was engaged in prayer for her. In a few minutes Selina re-entered, more than herself. Oh! had you seen her, sir, for description must indeed fail of giving you an idea of the blessed serenity of her pale but heaven-lighted countenance! Confident am I, to this hour, that some vision of angels had appeared to her—it was more—far, far more than human. Matilda threw her pretty arms around her, and tears of tender love and gratitude flowed from her eyes upon her sister's bosom.

"Mr. Hamilton desired them to retire for the night, as both seemed to require rest; and when he gave his parting blessing to his kneeling Matilda, saying, it was the last time he should ever bless Matilda Hamilton, Selina also sunk on her knees, and the words, 'bless me, even me also, oh, my father!' burst from her quivering lips. Mr. Hamilton did so with the most solemn ardour, and when, both impressing a parting kiss on the lips of each of their friends, they left the room, he said—'I felt equal agitation in giving my nightly blessing to both, for Selina's heart seems rent at the loss of our darling, as much as Matilda's is agitated by the event of to-morrow.' He then wished once more to assure his Selina that Matilda would still be hers—that Percy, far from depriving them of Matilda, would be a dear addition to the family; but Mrs. Seymour, with an eagerness I could not account for, entreated him not to agitate himself and them by a second parting for the night; she feared that these assurances would only farther torture Selina's feelings, and perhaps overcome her self-command.

"Mr. Hamilton then spoke of his equally-precious children. He said, for his sweet Matilda, he felt only agitation, but no anxiety; but he was alarmed for the constitution of his sacred, treasured Selina, by seeing her health so much affected by her feelings; yet though he said he felt no *anxiety* for Matilda, his last words, as we entered our separate apartments were—'To-morrow is an awful day—pray that it may be a happy one!' I know not whether this feeling was of an ominous nature, or that he felt something he could not account for, or explain, in the manners of Frederick.

"Next morning, Selina was the first who appeared at our door to hasten us; Matilda was entirely dressed by her, and in the arrangement of her hair, Mrs. Seymour, with wonder, saw that not only Selina's hands had been busied, but her taste exercised. I well remember that her beautiful auburn hair was adorned with white roses; it was from that day she contracted such a passion for them, as to be really more happy while they are in season than at other times; it was those roses, sir, she this evening strewed on the grave of her father and sister. Oh! never did I see my pretty child look so very lovely as that day! As I was to perform the service, I was in the church before them; but at this moment the gaily-adorned procession seems to move before my aged eyes: Matilda glowing in bright hope of felicity, trembling at the awful ceremony before her, blushing at the universal gaze, and resting her shrinking form on the supporting arm of her sister: Selina's steady, solemn step, her lofty air, her calm, collected countenance, her dark uplifted eyes, her snowy paleness—oh, sir! she looked like an angel sent to bless the nuptials of a favourite charge, yet ready to reascend to her native heaven: The changeful countenance of the venerable father—his look of doting tenderness, of doubtful, tremulous joy—the gay, airy figure of Anna Percy, as she walked on the other side of Matilda—the pleasure-lighted smiles of her mother, the look of my wife towards Selina, seeming to express almost the veneration of idolatry—her smile of fond congratulation, as she looked at the bride, mingling with an expression of sadness, to me unaccountable, until another glance towards Selina pressed on my mind, with more force than ever, the idea which had once before occurred to it: The train of female friends and domestics of both families, of whom the sweet bride was the universal darling, gay or serious pleasure speaking on each face, according to the different characters—all—all I see as if it had occurred but yesterday. In the other aisle Frederick Percy advanced, surrounded, in the same manner, by the young men of the neighbourhood, and accompanied by his father. His face it was impossible to read; a fixed intensity of feeling absorbed all expression. As they approached the altar, the moment he came within reach of his bride, he seized her hand with an abrupt vehemence, while he uttered, in a low but solemn and energetic tone, the words—'Dearest! most beloved!' I could scarcely account for the deep, unusual solemnity I felt in pronouncing the awful charge with which the service opens; the pause which followed it was lengthened by this emotion. Matilda raised her innocent face, as if doubtful whether I required an answer, and

Frederick threw up his eyes to heaven, with an expression which I afterwards understood to be that of devoutly offering up the sacrifice of every sentiment which his conscience could consider an impediment to the union he was about to form. His part of the service Frederick pronounced in a manner, which I have heard many who were present say, impressed them with the idea of peculiar piety; none can doubt that the firm intention of his heart was to have tenderly fulfilled the vows of protecting love he that day pledged."

The stranger, whose face had been for some time buried in his arms, here raised his head, and fixed his eyes for a moment on Mr. Seymour, with an expression of benignity and affection, then resumed his former posture.

"At the conclusion of the ceremony," resumed Mr. Seymour, "he held her in a long embrace, casting up his eyes rather in prayer than in thanksgiving; then resigning her to her father, kissed Selina, and called her his dear sister, with an ease and freedom of manner, which I have ever looked back to with pleasure, as a proof that his noble heart was free of the guilt of a double love. Selina smiled brightly and naturally: all was over—the sacrifice was completed; she saw those happy whom her warm heart most dearly loved, and she was happy too—not a struggle or a regret remained; all that she had loved and regretted in Percy for herself, she now loved and rejoiced in for her sister. We returned to the house. Shall I go on, sir?"

The stranger firmly answered—"Certainly, and fully and minutely."

Mr. Seymour continued—"All was peace in the breasts of this fated family; but the affection which has been cherished into a part of existence, mingled with every feeling and every habit from the first dawn of intelligence, no effort can eradicate—the branches may be lopped, but the root remains. Towards the close of the entertainment, at which all the guests were assembled, Selina being about to leave the room, Frederick followed her to the door, and put into her hand the letter which had been prepared the preceding evening. By what he said, she understood it to be a present, and I heard her cheerfully say, as she cordially gave him her hand, that she would value it as his gift. These last words I ever heard her utter—that last smile that ever illumined her beautiful features, removed from my mind all the gloomy forebodings of the morning.

" Matilda was for some time engaged in conversation with Mrs. Percy; but as soon as she could leave her, according to her usual custom, she moved to follow Selina. Her father interrupted her passage to the door, and laughingly told her, that now she was a wife, she must give up her infantine habits. He placed her hand in that of Frederick, who, fondly pressing her to his heart, said—' You must now learn to follow me, my Matilda.' My precious child! how lovely was the blushing pleasure which then smiled on her innocent countenance! Again he pressed her to him, and said—'But go, my love. Never shall I detain you from the dear sister who has made you what you are—go——" and as he relinquished her hand, she playfully smiled on him, and disappeared.

" Mr. Hamilton had but just uttered a few words in praise of the dear treasure he had that day bestowed on him, when a piercing shriek called us to the apartment of the sisters. The lifeless form of Selina lay extended on the ground; Matilda stood near her, the chill, pale statue of despair, as if the sight had struck her to marble, not even leaving the power of offering aid.

" For some minutes I cannot tell what passed. Both my wife and I were occupied in placing Selina on the bed, and trying to discover whether life remained. The physician, who had been of the bridal party, found it was fled for ever, but, with great presence of mind, endeavoured to persuade those around her that it might be only a temporary suspension of the faculties.

"An open letter lay on the floor. Mrs. Percy took it up, in the hope that by discovering the cause of her illness, some means of relief might be found. I know not how it came into Matilda's hand, or its contents to her knowledge.

"After some vain efforts, made rather to postpone the avowal of the truth than in any hope of reviving Selina, doctor Weldon turned all his attention to Matilda, called on by those next her, who were terrified at her immoveable stillness; all her faculties seemed stunned and annihilated.

"I sought for Percy, but he was no where to be found. In scenes like these, it is impossible to see accurately what passes; but I think I have some indistinct recollection of Frederick rushing wildly past me in the first terrific moments.

"The doctor wished her to be removed to another room; but the first attempt to this purpose seemed to recall her to life—

she sprung towards the bed, and having reached it, stood motionless, as before. All were then ordered to withdraw, except two young friends, whose flowing tears, it was hoped, might excite hers; those of my wife and Anna were chilled by horror; she continued still, and apparently senseless; they caressed sometimes her, and sometimes the lifeless form of her lately so dear to all. This she seemed only to observe when they obscured her view of it. They spoke of Percy; she shrieked, but answered not; all they could do was vain. The nurse, who had attended first Selina, and afterwards herself, was called in.

"Matilda looked at her as she entered, pointed to the face of her sister, but remained silent.

"The good nurse drew a chair, so as to command a view of that form she had once so fondly gazed on, and seating herself there, she drew Matilda on her knees. She continued in the same state of lifeless

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torpor for more than two hours. As the light began to fail, she drew nearer, and at length slowly pronounced the word—'Light.'

"It was procured for her; and soon after, doctor Weldon, who had been engaged with her father, thinking that any effect of added affliction must be preferable to her present state, entered the chamber of death. He took her hand—'Matilda,' he said, 'your father is ill. Look at Selina; not now can she fly on his summons. You are his only comfort.'

'Am I?' she said, vaguely, and rising instantly, she accompanied him.

"Mr. Hamilton had lived but in his children; the strong mind, the tenderness of Selina, had been the stay on which he rested; the playfulness, the soft vivacity of Matilda, had been as the vital spring of life. Both were now lost, and the hapless father sunk with them.—'Oh, where,' he exclaimed, 'where is my sainted child, to pour the heavenly balm of her mild spirit on my wounded heart? where is my lovely soother, my sportive darling, in this hour of deepest woe?"

"As the moving statue of Matilda was led in, he stretched out his arms to receive her; but while his tears flowed abundantly on her pale cold cheek, not one responsive drop softened her glazed eyes; yet repeatedly and tenderly she kissed him; and seating herself on his bed, she watched him with the most attentive care, perfectly remembering all that had been done for him in former illness, and rising herself for all within the room; but sometimes with movements alarmingly rapid, sometimes slowly, as if she forgot the object of her search. Her pale lips moved often as she looked at me, but she seemed to have lost the power of speech.

"At two o'clock in the morning, doctor Weldon announced to me that he had no hope of Mr. Hamilton; that he thought a few hours, at most, would unite his soul to that of his blessed Selina. It was when this came to Matilda's knowledge she first spoke; throwing her arms around him, she leaned her head on the pillow, and exclaimed, in the sweetest tone of persuasion—'Oh, papa, you will not leave your own little Matilda after you!'

"He grasped her hand, and trying once more to press his lips to hers, he expired. She remained for several minutes in the same position, doctor Weldon not permitting her to be disturbed. At length she rose, and leaving the room, returned to that of Selina; here again she laid herself beside the corpse, and kissing her forehead, she said, in allusion to Percy's last words—'I know I shall never be detained from her;' then looking, with a farewell smile, at me, she dropped her cheek on Selina's, and again closing her eyes, lay still and silent. Again she arose, and returned to her father, looked at him, went back to Selina, and exclaimed—'And I live still! Oh, Selina!'

"The whole remainder of the night she continued wandering between the two rooms, by turns laying herself beside each, with her cheek pressed to theirs; and sometimes she remained so long in this position, that we hoped she had fallen into a dose. In the morning she seemed to have a more distinct idea of the sufferings of death; for, as she stood gazing on Selina, she would repeatedly exclaim—'Did she suffer? did she suffer?'

"Doctor Weldon assured her that her breath had escaped without a pang; and looking up at him, with a smile, she asked—'Will mine do so soon?'

"Frequently, through this night of horror, I heard her whisper into that ear which would no longer delight in her sweet harmonious accents, soft reproaches that she was left so long—'Oh, Selina, she said, 'you gratified me in every thing—you taught me to live only with you, and now you have forgotten me!'

"Finding her likely to continue in the same state, I left her to the care of Mrs. Seymour, while I went to Percy Abbey, that family having left the house early in the preceding day, without my knowledge. I was most anxious to make inquiries about Frederick, but the shrieks of Matilda, whenever he was named, deterred me until I could leave her. He was indeed gone, leaving a note for Anna, the words of which I remember—

'Beloved Anna, farewell! You are now my parents' only child; but do not fear suicide!'

"This little note, sir, lady Dellaville preserves with care, and never mentions her lost brother without tears; her eldest son, sir, bears his name.

"But to continue.—Mrs. Percy gave me some idea of the contents of the letter, which she had begun to read, when some one drew it from her; but indeed the poor mother was too much horror-struck to give a distinct account of any thing. When I returned to the parsonage, I got the letter from Matilda, into whose possession it had fallen, by some means still unknown. Would you wish to hear it, sir?"

"Yes, all—every thing," replied the

stranger, in a voice which emotion rendered scarcely audible.

" First, sir," resumed Mr. Seymour, " I ought to tell you that, from his servant Harrison, who, till his death, remembered his young master with grateful affection, we learned the fatal accident which brought this letter to Selina's hands. The night, or rather morning of his marriage, when Harrison obeyed the summons of his bell, he found him pacing the apartment in the most vehement agitation. Two sealed letters lay on the table; he hastily addressed one to lord Dellaville, desiring Harrison to put it in the post-office; and when Harrison inquired, should he take the other also, he answered—' No, I will give it myself—it is a present.' He then directed it to Miss Hamilton.

" The letter, with the veil, reached lord Dellaville; the other Selina. Now I will read it, sir—

' You ask me why do I marry this lovely angelic being, while my heart is devoted to her sister? It is the last time I can open my heart to you; to-morrow will seal my lips for ever on the subject. You know how I loved Selina—how I looked up to her, idolized her, though her cruel neglect of my letters had added indignation to the dreadful conviction that my attachment was unreturned: you know with what agony I obeyed my father's summons to B——, where I was to meet, estranged from me, an object so long—so fondly cherished: you know what my feelings were—how agitated, how desponding!—but I cherished some feelings, uncommunicated even to you. Though my wounded affection led me to shun with horror the idea of meeting her, yet, when it was forced upon me—when I thought of seeing her what she was, my softened feelings admitted a ray of hope, that though she had so utterly forgotten me in her mother's illness, she might, in seeing me, feel a renewal of her early friendship. Oh, so many recollections crowded on my mind, so tender, so soul-touching, that I felt she could not be recalled to them, without partaking somewhat of my feelings!

'I left you, Dellaville—I expected to see her; but I was told that her father, contrary to his own wishes, had, to indulge her, consented to her leaving the country, on a visit, at the moment of my expected return. Matilda, who knew her every thought, had never heard me named. My only sister knew me but as a disobedient son. Oh, that walk! Never was this heart rent with such anguish; every hope was blasted—every feeling outraged! yet, in that very hour, my heart was as devotedly hers as ever. I gazed on Matilda, her pupil, her child, her idol, resembling her, I thought, in every feature. I heard the thrilling tones of her voice—those tones so impressed on my heart as the tones of Selina. You have said that I am proud to a faulty degree. Was this my pride, Dellaville?

'At the moment when I had learned that she had forgotten my existence, I hung with rapture on every word, every look of Matilda, for her sake. I was constantly at her side. I delighted to engage her in conversation—to hear the sweet sentiments instilled by her sister. Often it was on my lips to open to Matilda my whole heart; but I drew back—I feared that she too would spurn me for having dared to aspire to the affections of Selina. Often have you accused me of too great reserve. You only know that the heart of the cold unfeeling Frederick Percy burns with the most glowing ardour; you only know that he who has been ever considered the most stoically immoveable of men, possesses a sensibility too, too susceptible; you only know this, because, till lately, you only loved me. Selina knew it once; but it is forgotten now.

'Dellaville, do not blame this suppression of my feelings. To whom should they be communicated? My parents, proud of my boasted talents, thought only of them, and overlooked my heart; Anna was too young to enter into my feelings;

Selina knew them all—to her I confided every thought—she I made my partner soul—and she deserted me! My heart was chilled and driven in. Often when the excellent Mr. Seymour has kindly inquired the cause of my depression, I have been almost tempted to confide in him. But can you wonder that this heart, betrayed by the only human being who knew all its intricacies, should not be ready to open itself to another? You, Dellaville, my dearest, best friend—you won upon it; the heart you gained, you preserved. Through years of suffering you have been my steady guide, my gentle comforter, my patient hearer, and with you I have ever been candid.

'Matilda I considered as a beautiful fascinating child, who seemed inclined to sympathise with me. I fondly, tenderly loved her as such. As such, when I gazed on her open brow, her smile of truth, her blush of sensibility, I thought that to her, the cherished darling of my beloved, I might speak with confidence; but so looked Selina. Such was the cordial affection of her manner towards me—such the smile that banished all reserve: yet, when in my first letter I opened all my heart, she deigned not to notice it. Again I wrote, implored her pardon for having so far betrayed my feelings, and entreated her to write to me as a friend, to inform me of the state of her mother's health; but the offence was not to be forgiven; and should I repeat it through Matilda? No, I was silent; not even Anna entertained a suspicion of the truth. Was I too weak? I will confess to you now, that after all I had heard—all I had seen, my heart trembled within me, the day I was to meet her, with an agitation which only some lingering hope could have inspired. I dared to hope that in her manner there would be something of correspondent emotion; but the first moment I was undeceived. She entered the room, glowing in a brilliancy of beauty which all said was peculiar in her to uncommon cheerfulness. She rejoiced in being restored to her sister, her father, and Anna, and remembered not that she was to see the presumptuous Percy, until Matilda pronounced my name. She advanced with an extended hand. Never, never can I forget it. There was sufficient kindness to convince me that my offence was forgotten—sufficient coldness to prove that she had no recollection of early attachment. Her father said I did not seem glad to see her. I know not what I answered, but I turned to Matilda, and drew her away, to seem as if my presumptuous heart had not dared to feel even agitation. Selina embraced and kissed my sister, rejoiced to be released from my presence.

‘As the mistress of the house, it was my place to attend her to the dinner-table. I thought I might do so, but I was repulsed.

‘Matilda was to me a sweet resource from all the embarrassment of my situation; and sometimes the deep yet lively intelligence of her mind could even calm its bitterer feelings.

'For some days a cold prevented her singing; but at length, to gratify Matilda, she sung. At that moment I dreaded that my feelings would be betrayed. I trembled; but struggling with my emotion, I uttered not a word, not knowing what to do. Dreading again to hear her voice, I called on Matilda for a favourite song. She was angry at my rudeness towards her sister. Sweet child! how I felt to love her! But this heart tenaciously clung to hope, in spite of reason. The tremor of Selina's voice, I dared to hope, might have been caused by recollection of the last time she sung for me; and her paleness, her languor, all in that blissful moment, I ventured to attribute to feelings which never—no, never existed. My heart opened; thrown off my guard, I uttered some words of how far my happiness depended on her. I know not what they were, but I well remember her answer—"That is a more important trust, sir, than I desire to be honoured with."

'It recalled me to myself—it iced every

feeling she wished to be annihilated. Yes, I joined her in common conversation.

'That night I wrote to you, my dearest friend, to tell you that I would join you immediately. The next day I went to the parsonage to take leave. I hoped not to see her; but I could not bear to leave the country without bidding farewell to the venerable Mr. Hamilton and my sweet Matilda. Selina was in the study; *she* informed me that Matilda's love was mine; *she* said that the union was one she approved. To hear that I was beloved by this lovely, inestimable Matilda—to hear it from *her* lips, I know not what I said or did. Matilda was yet dearer to me than my own sister; had not my heart been irrevocably engaged, it had been hers; but until that moment I had never considered her other than as a child—a child who had won on my fondest affection—who had become dearer to me than any object on earth, save one alone. I loved her nearly as much as I love you, and with a more endearing tenderness. But, far from any self-appropriating attachment, I often wished that my beloved Dellaville had such a wife as Matilda—my beloved Matilda such a husband as Dellaville. But you, who have been a cherished son, who have been reared as the idol of all around you, you cannot fully comprehend the power of love over a heart repulsed and chilled like mine. You cannot imagine the revulsion of my feelings, when I learned that I was the first object of Matilda Hamilton's invaluable affection.

'The root of a first love strikes so deep, that it can never be wholly eradicated; its branches twine round every fibre of the heart, and even when withered, still retain their hold. This I am aware of, but yet fear nothing for the happiness of Matilda. Perhaps I do not love her as I might have loved Selina, had she been mine; but conscious of her love for me, conscious how much her happiness must depend on me, she is certainly dearer to my heart than Selina now is.

'Morning dawns: this sun will see me

the husband of Matilda Hamilton. Never again can my heart be fully open even to you. To be beloved by Matilda—to be confident of her attachment, and yet not happy! In her, every other thought might be confided. Oh that she had been as a sister, the dear partaker of sorrows lightened by her sympathy! What a fate is mine! the only human being, except you, who love me sufficiently to enter into my feelings, must never know them! But again I repeat, dear Dellaville, do not fear for her. No, at the altar I will resign every feeling her husband ought not to entertain. Precious, precious creature! if you knew her, you would feel how impossible it is that my devoted tenderness for her should ever be deficient. Adieu, dearest Dellaville!

'Though I have thus dwelt on my past feelings, I trust I may now say that I am happy. My love for Selina is like a dear, though painful vision, faded from my sight; while that for my Matilda smiles on me, with promises of lasting felicity. Yet I feel a strange terror of the coming day. I will try to sleep. You will be enchanted with my Matilda—when shall I introduce you to her? I have already bespoken for you a high place in her regard. I do not now dread any recollections connected with your appearance. Truly, my dearest Dellaville, could you win upon Selina's love, I should rejoice to see you blessed with her. I now only regard her as the guardian angel of my Matilda, interested in me for her dear sake. Come to me, my dearest friend. Adieu!

'F. P.'

* * *

"The perusal of this letter," continued Mr. Seymour, "left no farther doubt of the cause of Selina's death. She was happy in the confidence that her Matilda and he were so, and at the first words, suddenly convincing her that Frederick was even more wretched than she had been, and that Matilda would possess only a divided affection, her heart was rent in twain.

The flight of Percy too was now too well accounted for.

"When I returned to the parsonage, I found that Matilda had gone to the churchyard, accompanied by my wife, who was desired by the physician to gratify every wish, to fix, as my Jane found, when they reached it, on the spot where her father and sister should be laid. The whole seemed to have burst on her mind in the moment she first saw Selina lifeless; for, incapable of receiving any new idea, all connected with them she perfectly understood, and seemed prepared for. I had feared that the funerals would be a new shock to her; but it was now evident that the idea was at once connected with that of their death.

"When she had fixed on one spot, because it was nearest the church, she said—'But no—there is no space for me beside it.' Afterwards she sent herself to the school founded by Selina, to desire that all the children might attend her to the grave—‘ That she may have,’ she said, ‘ a tomb of orphan’s tears wept over her—orphan!’ The word seemed to vibrate on her ear; and as she repeated it, with a heavy sigh, she impressively added—‘ Mine are orphan’s tears, and they would relieve me—but that is no matter now.’

“ Most of that night she continued, as before, wandering between the two apartments, and gazing first at one, then at the other. The name of Percy had not yet been uttered.

“ Early the following morning the physicians sent for from London arrived, and gave it as their opinion that Matilda’s case was incurable, the brain having received an injury from the shock, in some of the delicate fibres, which no art could repair; but at the same time they gave us the satisfaction of assuring us, that the same cause prevented her feeling the affliction with the intensity of which her mind, in a sane state, would have been capable. Indulgence, even in what might to us appear calculated to increase her sorrow, was prescribed as the only means of preserving her in a calm and placid state.

"The day when the funerals were to take place, she remained all the morning in Selina's room. My wife was shocked at the idea of her seeing the body removed; but in the course of the day she said herself that they must go now.—'But first papa,' she said, 'for she must go between them.'

"As the coffin was carried down the staircase, she stood at the top, her countenance still, and her whole form motionless. I had hoped that this scene of touching woe might have melted her to tears; but no, while every other eye was dissolved in heartfelt sorrow, hers remained dry and void. She watched until the coffin had been placed in the hall, and then, returning, she gazed for a moment on that which contained all the earthly remains of Selina; now, for the first time, her countenance in some degree expressed her feelings, and she laid her hand on her heart, as if some of the dreadful pressure had been softened by tender emotion; but soon resuming all her stillness, she said—'Now,' and suffered it to be removed. When the mournful train began to move on, she cried—'No—no, there is another!' She returned into each apartment, and looked wildly around, but stopping in that where her sister had been laid, she exclaimed—'Frederick, surely you will follow her? You cannot stay for me now,' and she continued her search, frequently calling on his name. 'Frederick, she is gone. Why—why do you delay?'

"Some confused idea then took possession of her mind, of an uncertainty whether she herself yet lived; but as the evening approached, she became more composed. Holding my wife's hand and mine, she stood gazing on the sky, and when the setting sun first struck her eyes, she exclaimed, with one of her brightest smiles of delight—'There, heaven is open now! I shall see them all; she promised it.' She then flew towards the door, but returning, called Selina's dog to accompany her. 'Come see her again, Fidele,' she said, 'and cry no more.' Bounding along the way to the churchyard, she stopped at the entrance, and said—'Be solemn here, Fidele—here I entered gaily *once*. It is an awful place.' Kneeling on the new-made grave, she raised her beautiful eyes to heaven, and continued several minutes in silent thanksgiving, as the lustre of her countenance indicated.

"The grave had already been strewed with white roses, as the double emblem of the youthful purity and spotless sanctity of those who rested there. Matilda pressed them, one after another, to her lips, in a low voice murmuring—'They were my bridal ornaments once—now they are hers. She is wedded to Heaven—I must be so too; and these, sacred as they now are, shall adorn my new bridal. I too shall be devoted to things above.' Then laying her fair head on the grave, she shed the first tears which had relieved her grief-stricken heart.

"Oh, what a sight was this! There lay entombed in earth the venerable father and the lovely child, who, a few days before, had, with joint energy, sought to shield all sorrow from those who could now only pay the sad tribute of their tears; there lay, in silent dust, that perfect form, whose fairer spirit no longer gave it all its highest charms; there lay that hoary head, so lately crowned with all the brightest honours of age; and there, too lost to reason to deplore their loss, stretched on the damp sod that covered them, lay her, but three days before their pride—their joy—the fairest—the best! But, oh, how sad a difference! they now, in bliss unutterable, blessed the wise end for which she was afflicted, while she——"

Mr. Seymour here interrupted himself, saying—"These are not scenes to look back to."

"They are scenes," said the stranger, in a hollow voice, "on which the lacerated heart delights to dwell."

Mr. Seymour continued—"Since that hour, sir, she has, every evening, at sunset, continued her visits to the grave of her father and sister; and when she talks of her death, she smilingly assures my wife and me, that when she is there, we shall see her.

"Once we took her a few miles distant, hoping it would be of use, but she seemed miserable and restless the whole evening, and we never made a second attempt. Even in rain she visits it. She objected so much to a tomb, as separating them from her, that we erected the little marble obelisk you saw, instead of one; and this, as well as the grave, she every day in summer adorns with fanciful wreaths of Selina's roses, as she calls them."

The stranger interrupted Mr. Seymour with an effort to speak, but it was long ere he regained the power of utterance;

at length he said—"And would the sight of any of these beloved objects—the restoration of them, bring her to her senses?"

Mr. Seymour answered—"No, it is an injury on the brain, which nothing can repair, though the sight of one might recall her to her first intensity of feeling. She is now perfectly happy; she is lost to others, but not to herself. She engages in prayer, which the most exemplary divine might find improvement in hearing; the only inconsistency being the trifles for which her devout and resigned prayers are offered. Yet they are not trifles to her; her sphere of happiness is circumscribed as that of childhood; but with the piety of mature years, and an elevated soul, she offers up to the Father of Mercies all the wants and wishes that constitute her little world. She will pray for the recovery of a sick bird, or bear its loss with pious resignation.

"The greatest trial of this nature she has known, since her derangement, was the death of Selina's dog; she felt for it, mourned for it, but resigned it as a person of superior mind and intellect might do for a beloved fellow-creature. The return of spring brings to her a real acquisition of happiness, in the opening of the flowers, and the renewal of verdure; she laments their departure with sorrow, but with hope, often saying, with a smile—'They will return again.' And if this reflection brings to her mind a recollection of those who will return no more, the tear it excites is soon succeeded by a smile of ecstacy, while she says—'But I will see them this evening, and I will soon go to stay with them entirely.'

"Nor are these the only interests which occupy and vary her life—she is not wholly lost to others; still faded, blighted, as she is, her fond affection and endearing attentions form the chief charm of our waning existence—still her sweet song can soothe the ear of sickness, and her gentle hand can smooth its pillow; still her disordered intellect can frame pleasures for us.

"Oh, sir, she is as a darling child, still in the simplicity of infancy, but with more than infantine intelligence. When, from her own desire to be gone, we force ourselves to look to her removal as a blessing, we feel that in her we resign all our highest interests in life; besides this, her thoughts, and her hands, are daily busied in works of charity. She has a little female infant school, in which she teaches herself, with much intelligence and patience; but as soon as any child has attained the age of seven, as if secretly conscious of her inability to carry her instructions farther, she dismisses her to a higher school, which she calls Selina's, and which she supports with her purse, though never with her presence. The children however, by whom she is adored, as she is by every person here, of every age and rank, often follow 'the lady,' as they call her, with entreaties that she will look at their mistress's favourable reports of their conduct, or suffer them to read to her, that she may judge of their improvement.

" The division of her time is regularly

arranged, with a mixture of reason and fancy. She rises very early, prays for a short time in her own room, then attends to the cleaning and replenishing the cages of her birds; after which she wanders in the garden, sometimes examining the flowers and buds, sometimes stopping in mental prayer, until summoned to join the family. In these morning occupations, as well as through every hour of the day and night, she is attended by the daughter of her nurse; and when health permits, by the nurse herself, both of whom love her with all the doting fondness usually given only to the endearments of infancy, and with all the deference which the ancient domestics of a family feel for their masters.

"Her conversation with us is frequently a detail of the little incidents of the morning, respecting her birds and flowers, leading us, with caressing sweetness, to any that have particularly pleased her, and turning our steps with cautious tenderness, as from a painful object, from any that are faded or injured. She then attends to her school for two hours, immediately after which she goes to the parsonage-house, now inhabited by my curate's family, walks through every room, and frequently returns, without having spoken a word to any one. When returned home, she works, making clothes for the poor children, which she executes with a taste and fancy suited to higher rank. She also amuses herself in making beautiful toys, which she gives to Mrs. Seymour, and all the female friends she loved in former days, particularly lady Dellaville, whom she still calls Anna Percy.

" When she casually heard of her marriage, she seemed much shocked, and inquired—' Is her father alive ?' On being answered in the affirmative, she asked—' And her mother ?' On another affirmative, she thoughtfully pressed her hand on her forehead, and said, with a sigh—' It is strange—unaccountable !'

"Anna's visits were at first frequent; but as we found they always agitated our precious charge, and left her silent and dejected, they were gradually relinquished; and then lord Dellaville removed her from scenes which pressed too heavily on her spirits, but which till then she would not quit.

"When tired of her needle, Matilda wanders about in the gardens or fields, or accompanies Mrs. Seymour in her visits to the neighbouring poor, by whom she is regarded as a kind of superior being, towards whom an act or word of kindness is rewarded by a blessing, and from whom it is valued as a happy omen. At the approach of sunset, she repairs, as I have already mentioned, to the churchyard, and immediately on her return retires to rest.

"This is the ordinary routine of her life, which is seldom varied, unless if either of us is ill, when she rarely leaves us, except at the well-remembered period of the year which decided her fate. On 'the day,' as she emphatically terms it, she lays out on her bed the whole of her bridal attire, even the faded roses which adorned her beautiful hair, as well as the bridemaid's dress of Selina, and the white gloves of her father; these she examines and arranges; in Selina's dress, kissing with awful tenderness the parts which most nearly touched the person, and in her own, those which, in dressing her, had most required the assisting hands of Selina. She has another pair of man's gloves, selected from those which had not been worn, which she calls '*his*,' never naming the person to whom she appropriates them, and places among the articles belonging to her sister. She arranges her hair on that day herself, in the form in which Selina had dressed it, though at other times she leaves to her attendant the care of it, in which she is very particular, on account of the pride and pleasure Selina took in its uncommon beauty.

"From these days she always reserves one rose, which she keeps in a packet by themselves, as if for a memorandum of the number of years; the last time she reckoned them over, she repeated the number 'twenty,' to which they now amount, in a tone of surprise, adding, 'and yet he is not there. At least they never shewed him to me.' She paused a while, then said —'It is wonderful!'

"This, and the few succeeding days in every year, she seems much absorbed in thought—the little she says, always recurring to the past; at other times she scarcely ever touches on it, and is habitually serene, cheerful, and easily amused.

"The state of agitation in which you saw her this evening is quite unusual. If any new event should arouse her from her present state of tranquillity, it would be more likely to exchange it for one more troubled, than for one more happy; therefore," he added, fixing his eyes on the stranger, "if Frederick Percy lives, I hope she may never know it."

The stranger arose, and paced the apartment with unequal steps for some time, when Mrs. Seymour, kindly asking, would he wish to retire to rest? he assented. He grasped their hands with the fervour of affection, and hastily turned away; but instantly returning, he said—" One thing more. Could you, without her knowledge, give me a lock of that precious hair?"

" I can," answered Mrs. Seymour, taking it from the same pocketbook which contained the letter—" one which she herself cut off for me."

As she placed it in his hand, an universal tremor shook his frame.

Mr. Seymour conducted him to his apartment in silence, and, as he entered it, said—" To-morrow I have much to inquire of you."

The stranger wrung his hand, and instantly closed the door.

" Surely," exclaimed Mrs. Seymour, when her husband returned, " surely you know who this is? Some parts of the sad story might have been omitted, for his sake."

" No," answered Mr. Seymour, " I saw

he wished to know all; and
were torture to him. At first
know him, but attributed his e
affliction, which taught him sym

"Do you remember," said
"the interesting account my bro
of a soldier in his regiment, who
manner impressed him with th
his belonging to a very superio
life—whose bravery had often
him to the distinction which he
ly shunned? The regiment i
England."

"I am convinced you are rig
rupted Mr. Seymour; "and t
hardship has aided sorrow in cha
fine features from our remembra

"My brother," she rejoined, "
this noble soldier appeared to su
overwhelming affliction, the
which, from the reserve and sile
of his demeanour, he conceived t
rash action, by which he had tar
honour; and he was confirme
idea by the tears which he has

fill his eyes on the eve of any desperate engagement; there was then, in his whole air and countenance, a something which told that pleasurable emotion had thawed the ice that at other times seemed to chill his heart."

"He said," added Mr. Seymour, "that the frequent animated glance of his eyes towards heaven at that time, gave him the idea that he then looked with hope to a speedy reunion with some beloved object already there, or to his deliverance from a stain which nothing could efface on earth. His desperate bravery too, which seemed rather to court death than honour, yet which, on any emergency critical to the service, was exchanged for the cooler courage of sober judgment. All his accounts correspond both with the circumstances and character of the noble Frederick Percy."

This worthy couple retired to rest, determined that they would, in the morning, acknowledge to their guest their suspicions, endeavour to soothe his mind, and lead him back into the pleasures of social life. But in the morning he was gone; he had left the house before even Matilda had arisen. On the tomb of Selina was found a glove; and in his apartment the following lines, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Seymour:—

"You have discovered me. I thought I came armed for all I had to hear; but my weakness has betrayed me. By all the kindness you express for Frederick Percy—by all the generous pity you feel for his misfortunes, though they involved those of friends so dear to you, I implore you, never seek me farther—never mention my existence to any one, except my beloved Dellaville and Anna, and to them only if you think, from their solicitude about my fate, that it would be a gratification to them to form some more distinct idea of it. In this case, tell them that I am not the frantic slave of wild despair, though I feel all in this world lost and annihilated to me; but my hopes are firmly fixed on a better, and I wait with desire, but not with impatience, my removal to it. The only call which could have renewed my existence here, would have been the power of contributing to Matilda's restoration. That call has not been made. I am dead in every sense of the word, but the breath I draw. My inheritance is Anna's, as fully and as really as if that breath had ceased. Tell her that I have seen her—her husband—her children, though they knew it not.

"From the present state of my mind and sentiments, I feel that my blessing and prayers are not unworthy to be offered up for them, for you both, and for the beloved and holy innocent who has been the chief sufferer in my fate."

It was without a signature.

FINIS.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.